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*The Letters of*  
JOHN KEATS



*George Keats*



*Thomas Keats*



*John Keats*



*Fanny Keats*



*Fanny Brawne*

*The Letters, of*  
JOHN 'KEATS,

*Edited by*  
MAURICE BUXTON FORMAN

*FOURTH EDITION*  
*WITH REVISIONS AND*  
*ADDITIONAL LETTERS*

GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE  
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## PREFACE

WHAT manner of man was John Keats, and how did he live the life poetic?

The answer to these questions lies, it seems to me, within the pages of this volume of his letters. These letters provide the main source from which any adequate record of those few short years of poetic production and any sound appreciation of his personality must derive, and if it be contended that they give a one-sided view of his nature, it may fairly be claimed that he himself was the only person properly equipped to offer the material for a just estimate of his character. But Keats himself was making no such offer to the public—‘a thing I cannot help looking upon as an Enemy, and which I cannot address without feelings of Hostility’ he says in a letter to Reynolds—he was writing freely and frankly to his kinsfolk and his friends, and without restraint to the girl he passionately loved, and nowhere in his correspondence can be found any suggestion of a pose to discount the value of his own unwitting evidence. To hold this view of the biographical importance of the letters is not to detract in any way from the achievements of his biographers. Sir Sidney Colvin and Amy Lowell produced lives of the poet of inestimable moment, and Mr. Middleton Murry in his ‘Keats and Shakespeare’ has perhaps plumbed greater depths than they in the mind and soul of Keats. Lord Houghton, in whose debt students of literature must ever remain, came nearest to Keats in point of time, having been born when Keats was in his fourteenth year, and he had the advantage of acquaintance with, and assistance from, the poet’s friends and contemporaries; yet the stronger of the lights his pages shed upon the life of his subject emanate from the letters he presented rather than from the biographical apparatus in which they are set.

To Harry Buxton Forman in the first place, and then to Sir Sidney Colvin, is due the credit of gathering and arranging the mass of Keats’s correspondence. Neither of those authorities showed any decided inclination to ‘place’ Keats in relation to the other great letter-writers in the English language, and I must candidly avow myself

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incompetent to rush in where they have feared, or failed, to tread. As this present collection is based on the latest published work of my father, supplemented by the fruits of his subsequent research, as well as from other sources, it will not be out of place to quote the views he expressed in his edition of 1895—the first in which the letters to Fanny Brawne were mingled with those to other correspondents in chronological order—which views he repeated in his edition of 1901. ‘If’, said he, ‘to be true, interesting, ‘attractive, witty, humorous, idealistic, realistic, speculative, discursive, and gossipy in turns is the note of a good ‘letter-writer, then indeed Keats was one. If to tell one’s ‘friends just what they want to know about one’s doings ‘and thoughts, and about the doings and thoughts of ‘mutual friends, is to be a good letter-writer—that is where ‘Keats, of all men of genius in the last century, excelled. ‘If consideration for the feelings of others in the manner ‘and degree of communicating misfortunes or disagree- ‘ables be an epistolary virtue, Keats was largely dowered ‘with that virtue. If to present a true picture of the essential ‘qualities of one’s personality is a valuable art, Keats ‘manifested that art in a high form in his letters. And if, ‘when wrung by disease and misery, it is better to leave ‘some record for a pitying posterity than to carry a ghastly ‘secret into the oblivion of the grave, then in this also Keats ‘exceeded others who have made the world richer with ‘their letters. Lastly, the man is not dissociated from the ‘poet in them. Not only is the poetic mode of thought ‘frequently the ruling mode in the prose fabric of these ‘letters; but they are set with gems of verse of all waters, ‘dashed in just as they were composed, a part of the man’s ‘life enacting and reflected throughout, and ranging in ‘quality from the merest doggerel calculated to fatten by ‘laughter (“Laugh and grow fat!”) to the very master- ‘pieces of poetic craft by which Keats has most blessed his ‘race. It is a far cry from

Two or three Posies  
With two or three simples—

‘to

O what can ail thee Knight at arms  
Alone and palely loitering?

‘But true it is that, in reading Keats’s letters with a fresh

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'eye, one never knows whether the next precious stone  
'one comes to, embedded in one of his racy, lively, in-  
'imitably good-tempered and well-conditioned prose pages,  
'will be of the one mood or the other.'

Colvin in a more succinct passage in the preface to his collection, written in May 1891, would apparently claim even greater merit for the letters when he says that 'if a  
'selection could be made from those parts only of Keats's  
'correspondence which show him at his best, we should  
'have an anthology full of intuitions of beauty, even of  
'wisdom, and breathing the very spirit of generous youth;  
'one unrivalled for zest, whim, fancy, and amiability,  
'and written in an English which by its peculiar, alert  
'and varied movement sometimes recalls, perhaps more  
'closely than that of any other writer (for the young  
'Cockney has Shakespeare in his blood), the prose passages  
'of "Hamlet" and "Much Ado about Nothing".' And in the preparation of such an anthology I venture to think that Sir Sidney would have been strongly tempted to go back on his expressed opinion of the love-letters and delve among them too for its enrichment.

Possibly there is more behind Colvin's attitude towards the letters to Fanny Brawne than simple criticism or innate delicacy, but in the case of certain other distinguished men of letters, no reason is apparent save personal conviction. And that is difficult to understand. Matthew Arnold, who admits the signs of disease and the seeds of consumption, can overlook those ever-present harassments when he writes of the love-letters, naïvely professing not to judge the letters written when he 'was near his end, under the throttling and unmanning grasp of mortal disease'. Surely, he had forgotten Keats's medical knowledge and insight, had forgotten that 'haunting sore throat', and had not realized the possibility of what some of us to-day believe, that practically the whole of Keats's poetic life was passed under the shadow of death. May he not be forgiven for this on account of the true things he said of Keats? The oft-quoted 'He is; he is with Shakespeare' will be remembered long after his harsh judgement of the Fanny Brawne letters is forgotten.

If the opinion of Arnold is perplexing, what is to be said of the deductions of Coventry Patmore after reading the letters for the first time in 1888? He who believed himself



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to be, and doubtless was, 'the sweetest-tempered and least savage of men', could 'find nothing in these letters that 'deserves a much better name than "lust"', and grudgingly he allows that 'with a man of splendid imagination like Keats the feeling would not express itself in vulgar forms, 'but would assume the singing robes of love, as far as that 'is possible in the absence of the true passion.' 'But that 'possibility', he adds, 'even for such a man as Keats, is very 'limited, and I fancy I detect artifice and cold self-consciousness in his most rhapsodical out-pourings.' A friend who has afforded me generous help while this book was passing through the press, urged me to hit out: he holds with me that Patmore was entirely wrong, and, again with me, he holds in high esteem the poet of 'The Angel in the House'. But is it worth while? Is there anything in the general impression Patmore expressed in his short letter to my father that one can counter? And may it not be that on later consideration he modified his views? If he could not see that Keats was seeking, and seeking passionately, to establish for himself a pure and beautiful ideal in the person of his lady love, it is too late now to convince him. Let it suffice to regard his interpretation with 'wonder and bedazement', to use his own words, and look upon it, as he himself suggested, as 'a psychological curiosity'.

With regard to the actual publication of Keats's letters to Fanny Brawne, my father, upon whom the burden of that responsibility rests, died in the belief that in giving them to the world he was performing an act of justice to the poet's memory; he looked upon them as essential to any picture of the true Keats, and he thought, as he said, Keats's letters without those to Fanny Brawne very much like 'Hamlet' without the Prince of Denmark. What seems to me to be an unanswerable justification for their publication, if one is needed at this late date, is given by Mr. Middleton Murry in his 'Keats and Shakespeare' when he declares that 'those who cannot understand Keats's love, 'will never understand his poetry, for these two things 'spring from a single source'. Can any man understand his love until he has read those letters 'which pierce the sense and live within the soul'? Were yet another justification for my father's action required, it could be found in the fact that those thirty-nine living documents, once for a while

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together in his keeping, came by force of circumstances under the disintegrating sway of the auctioneer's hammer and are now scattered over the face of the earth. Those who care to examine the table of contents, in which the source of each letter and, where traced, the present owner of the original are given, may see that of the series to Fanny Brawne I have succeeded in tracing only nineteen; eighteen are in America, one in the Keats Museum at Hampstead. It is to be regretted that they did not share the fate of the letters to that other Fanny, his sister, which at her death passed from my father's care, all save six, into the hands of the nation.

It is proper to state that the present collection of Keats's letters is based primarily on the fourth and fifth volumes of 'The Complete Library' edition prepared by H. Buxton Forman for Messrs. Gowans and Gray in 1901. The editor of that edition never regarded any of his work on Keats and Shelley as final, and no sooner had he put into print his latest acquisitions, than he resumed his watch for anything by or relating to them, so that when he passed on in 1917 he left an interesting assortment of new and revised material in his working copies. All appropriate matter from that source, together with a considerable quantity of material from other sources, was included in my previous edition. The 1901 collection referred to above contained two hundred and seventeen letters or parts of letters. This number had grown to two hundred and thirty-one in 1931, and in many of the old letters corrections and additions of moment had been made. Wherever possible, the original letters, or trustworthy reproductions of them, were examined and, in accordance with modern practice, Keats's orthography and punctuation, wayward and curious as they were at times, were restored. In the present edition the number of letters has advanced to two hundred and forty-one, and many more of the originals of the earlier printed letters have come to light and have been collated anew. In the manner of presenting the letters practically the same procedure has been followed as in the previous edition, save that Keats's punctuation has not been altered, or supplemented, and his spelling and his pen-slips have been given without remark, except in a few instances when it has been thought desirable to add a letter, or indicate a slip; where this has been done conical brackets have

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been used to mark editorial interference. Some few letters addressed to the poet have been added and all such letters, as well as those previously given in the notes, have been embodied in the text.

Of the letters brought into the collection for the first time in 1931 the most important were those now numbered 71, 72, and 152, addressed respectively to Tom Keats, George Keats, and Richard Woodhouse. My attention was first drawn to the letter to Tom Keats by an article from the pen of Professor Ralph Leslie Rusk who later gave me photostats of the pages of 'The Western Messenger' in which it was printed (see note on page 153): those to George Keats and Woodhouse were first printed by Amy Lowell in her 'John Keats', and were given by me from photostats of the originals in Harvard College Library. I also enjoyed the advantage of collating the letters in the Pierpont Morgan Library by means of photostats kindly sent to me by the Director, Miss Belle da Costa Greene. From both these Libraries I have been privileged to draw further material and information for use on the present occasion.

It gave me no little satisfaction five years ago to bring together, after nearly a century of separation, the contents of the two leaves of the letter of the 3rd of November 1817 to Benjamin Bailey. Lord Houghton in 1848 had printed a part of it as the 'Outside sheet of a letter to Mr. Bailey'. In his four-volume edition of 1883 my father followed Lord Houghton's lead, merely adding at the close the words, 'I don't relish his abuse'. Before he published his supplementary volume in 1890, he was in a position, I know not how, to make a further addition by giving the first part of the outside sheet. In 1927 the inside leaf, bearing the first two pages, belonging to Mr. H. J. Swinburne Bailey, the grandson of Keats's friend, was sold at the Anderson Galleries, New York, and bought by Mrs. James B. Murphy of that city, who kindly sent me a photostat of her acquisition. Mrs. Murphy's share of the letter starts of course at the beginning, and ends with the word 'groan', and it bears, written crosswise, the first two stanzas of the song 'O Sorrow!' on page 1, and the third and fourth stanzas and two lines of the fifth on page 2. The message to Gleig and Whitehead is also written on the first page. The last seven lines of the Song and the close of the letter with the signature are written crosswise on the Harvard leaf.

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To William Haslam	February 1819	Page 302
To George Keats from Shanklin	June or July 1819	„ 398
To James Rice	24 or 25 August 1819	„ 373
To Charles Brown from London	September 1819	Pages 390, 394
To Charles Brown from Winchester		
To (?Thomas) Fry	September 1819	Page 398
To Joseph Severn	October 1819	Sharp's 'Life and Letters of Joseph Severn' Page 40
To George Keats (written by Brown as from Keats)	March 1820	„ 484
To Charles Brown	15 May 1820	„ 489
To Charles Brown	August 1820	„ 513
To Charles Brown	August 1820	„ 517
To William Haslam	23 August 1820	„ 518

Messrs. Birss and Holman also note a letter to Severn, 'Nov. 2, 1819 (?) Libbie Catalogue: April 22, 1897', of which I know nothing, and refer to Sharp's life of the artist, page 40, where there is a suggestion of letters from Keats in the Isle of Wight and at Winchester in 1819 and mention of an invitation to Severn to join his friend at Winchester for a few days. There is also a definite statement that Severn received a letter from Keats headed 'College Street, Westminster', which would of course belong to October 1819. I have been able to print only four letters to Severn and it is probable that the painter distributed a good many among autograph collectors. I have an undated catalogue of the contents of 'Frederick Locker's Great Album', offered for sale by Dodd, Mead and Company of New York, which contains the following entry under 'Keats':

A. L. S. *Addressed*, 'Joseph Severn Esqre 128 Goswell Street'; *dated*, 'Friday afternoon'; *signed*, 'John Keats.' 1 page quarto, . . . With authentication by Severn, and certificate of the British Vice-Consul at Rome.

'I am rearily (*sic*) sorry that I have an engagement on Saturday to which I have looked forward all the Week more especially because I particularly want to look into some beautiful scenery for poetical purposes.' &c.

Despite the assistance of friends in the United States I have not been able to trace the 'Great Album'.

Of letters to Leigh Hunt I know of only two, the one in

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the Ashley Library, signed 'John Keats alias Junkets', Letter 14, and Letter 230, probably the last Keats wrote to Hunt, in the library of Mr. Owen D. Young. Yet in 'The Cornhill Magazine' for May 1892, in an article entitled 'Concerning Leigh Hunt', the writer introduces Mr. Young's letter with these words: 'Of Keats's letters to Hunt I have several, but as I believe them to have been 'already published in some form or other I will give only 'a short one which I have never seen in print'. When so much Hunt material has been 'scat abroad' one wonders that some of those several letters have not emerged.

To Keats's earlier friend Cowden Clarke we have five letters. In reply to his inquiry in 1883 Mary Cowden Clarke told my father that 'all our letters from dear John Keats have already been given away as autographs'. With Bryan Waller Procter Keats's acquaintance was brief. Procter says that he saw him only two or three times before his departure for Italy, but I cannot believe that a written acknowledgement was not part of Keats's plan to make Procter 'sensible of the esteem' he had for his kindness in sending him his books. We have no letter to him, however, and Procter has little to say of Keats in the 'Autobiographical Fragment' edited by Coventry Patmore. Nevertheless the book is of interest to Keats lovers because it contains Landor's opinion of the younger poet: 'What a poet would poor Keats have been, if he had lived. 'He had something of Shakespeare in him, and (what nobody else ever had) much, very much of Chaucer.'

As my friend Mr. Edmund Blunden emphasizes in his 'Marginalia',<sup>1</sup> we have no correspondence with George Felton Mathew, with Cripps (whom I have since managed to trace up to 1831), with Charles Ollier, with Hazlitt, with John Hunt, with Charles Richards, with John Scott, with Edward Holmes, with Novello, with Hilton. Nor have we any with De Wint, with Davenport or Lewis (both neighbours of Keats), with Henry Stephens, to whom Keats might well have communicated his intention to pass through Redbourne on his way to Liverpool with George and Georgiana. Any of these may some day be gathered into the fold, and in the meantime they may provide interesting occupation for those who desire to achieve

<sup>1</sup> 'Keats's Letters, 1931; Marginalia', by Edmund Blunden, in 'Studies in English Literature', vol. xi, no. 4, Tokyo, October, 1931.

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merit in the pleasant fields of Keatsian research. Indeed, in that direction there are other questions that may strike readers of the letters as calling for solution. For example: where exactly is 'Elm Cottage', mentioned twice by Keats, and who was its tenant? Mr. Edgcumbe, the enthusiastic Curator of the Keats Museum, has searched the Hampstead rate-books in vain. Who and what was Bob Harris, see Letters 34 and 41? Authorities on Covent Garden history deny that he had anything to do with that establishment. Who were Miss Barnes and Miss Winter (page 310)? Probably Miss Barnes was the lady who stayed with the Hunts for a few days in September 1815; I know nothing more of her and nothing at all of Miss Winter. And there is yet to be determined a point arising out of the new letter to Fanny Keats about her confirmation. What was the little book Keats sent to his sister? Mrs. Marie Adami, whose essay on the said Fanny will, I hope, shortly appear in print, has tentatively selected 'The Catechism set forth in the Book of Common Prayer', printed at the Clarendon Press in 1817 and sold for sixpence; but there may be another book of its kind with stronger claims, and such books are not easy to come by a hundred years and more after publication. These points may seem trivial. They are not, for there is no knowing what they may lead to. And if they demand patience, patience is sometimes rewarded; mine was, only a few days ago, when I laboured through a long letter in the diminutive script of Caroline Scott, dated from Fontainebleau on the 19th of July 1817 and addressed to Haydon, and came upon the following passage:

'Whilst poets are my theme I must not omit saying a word or two of your young friend Keats. I am sorry to see that Mr. Hunt's critique upon his Book is done with an air of patronage, not with heart. I should have thought he could not have avoided giving a spirited article, upon verses containing so much true poetry: I will venture to predict notwithstanding that Keats will be to his critic bye and bye "as Mount Ossa to a Wart"—There are more of this opinion; yet still I have had battles to fight in defence of many little extravagancies contained in some of the pieces. I could not defend him in all, but I did my best, for I cannot bear those cold blooded people, who for a few faults will condemn a noble work, and thereby perhaps crush that enthusiasm

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'which always attends true genius, and sometimes leads  
'it, "to overstep the modesty of nature". A few years  
'upon the poet's head, will cure this fault, and after  
'such a sample as the work in question from the boy,  
'what may we not expect from the man! *My Lord*, and  
'I, traversed "these realms of gold" together with equal  
'pleasure, and we shall both look anxiously for the future  
'productions of the same pen.'

Caroline was the wife of John Scott, whom Keats, according to Browne, did not like. One wonders whether Haydon showed the letter to his friend.

There are many names to add to the list of those who gave me help during the preparation of my previous edition. First I must mention with deep regret Miss Ellen Mary Middleton Haydon, the daughter of Frank Scott Haydon, who died on the 25th of March 1935. Miss Haydon up to last Christmas seemed never to weary of answering my interminable questions about her grandfather and his associates, and she displayed an interest in anything by or concerning him I was able to send her. I fancy that, like her father, she had no delusions about him, while she was obviously anxious that he should not be misunderstood. I have evidence that almost up to the last she was searching among the voluminous correspondence left to her by her father for points of interest to me, and I feel that I have lost a kind and helpful friend.

Mrs. Marie Adami I must thank for her unflagging zeal and assistance in the collation of the Marquess of Crewe's holographs and transcripts, to which access was once more generously granted by his Lordship. To Mr. Edmund Blunden, whose many books dealing with the Keats period are an essential source of knowledge, I am grateful for much help and information. Mr. Frederick Edgcumbe has never failed to sacrifice his time in order to satisfy my demands, and I may remark that he is always ready to increase his burdens by adding to the steadily growing collection in the Keats Museum. Mr. Frederick Page has again kept a vigilant and beneficial eye on my proofs. Mrs. Charles E. Bodurtha, of Ohio, and Miss Naomi J. Kirk, of Indiana, have been ever willing to share with me any knowledge they have acquired in their particular branches of Keats research, and Mr. Louis A. Holman and Mr. J. Howard Birss have been assiduous in their

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hunting after Keats material and in imparting their discoveries and knowledge to me. Dr. J. Livingston Lowes kindly sent me a substantial list of Shakespeare references he had detected in Keats's letters, and the Harvard College Library authorities have been as helpful to me as before. My old friend Mr. Thomas J. Wise has lent me anything I liked to take from the Ashley Library.

For photostats, for the loan of documents and books, for information, and for assistance in various other ways I am indebted to Mrs. Esther Root Adams; Mr. Johannes C. Andersen; Mrs. W. Harris Arnold; the late Frank B. Bemis; Mr. R. P. Best, Director of the National Library of Ireland; Mr. Julian P. Boyd, Assistant Librarian of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Miss C. W. Braby; Mr. Nelson S. Bushnell; Miss Isabel C. Clarke; Mr. Stanley Cursiter, Keeper of the National Gallery of Scotland; the late F. Holland Day; Mr. Bonamy Dobrée; Professor Edward G. Fletcher; Professor H. W. Garrod; Miss Beatrice M. D. Gattie; Sir William Hale-White; Miss Ethel P. Hall, Librarian of the Maine Historical Society; Mr. P. P. Howe; Mr. W. T. H. Howe; Mr. Roger Ingpen; Miss Alice L. Keats; Mr. R. W. Kelsey, Curator of the Roberts Collection, Haverford College; Mr. A. C. G. Lloyd; Dr. T. Ollive Mabbott; Sir Eric Maclagan, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum; Messrs. Maggs Brothers; Sir Humphrey Milford; Mrs. James B. Murphy; Mr. J. Middleton Murry; Mr. A. Edward Newton; Dr. H. Clement Notcutt; Mr. Morris L. Parrish; Dr. T. Wilson Parry; Mr. Carl H. Pforzheimer; Dr. Willard B. Pope; Miss Fannie E. Ratchford; the Rev. J. F. Richards and Miss M. T. G. Richards; the Rev. M. R. Ridley; Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach; Mr. J. G. Ross; Mr. Howard J. Sachs; Mr. A. Hamilton Smith; Mr. Richard S. Smith; Mr. Arthur Swann; Miss Olive M. Taylor; Mr. Phillip Speed Tuley; Mr. John M. Turnbull; Dr. Gabriel Wells; Mr. Lucius Wilmerding; Mr. J. H. E. Winston. To these and to any friend whose name I have by mischance omitted I tender my thanks.

Finally I must thank Mrs. Oswald Ellis for allowing me to reproduce on a smaller scale than before the beautiful miniature of her grandmother, Fanny Brawne, for inclusion in the frontispiece. The portraits of George and Thomas Keats are reproduced from the Severn miniatures



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in the Keats-Shelley Memorial House at Rome, that of John from the Severn miniature, and that of Fanny Keats from the portrait painted for my father by Don Juan Llanos y Keats, both of which were given by my mother to the Keats House, Hampstead.

M. B. F.

LONDON

5 September 1935

## POSTSCRIPT

SINCE the third edition of this book was published I have not neglected to follow up every hint of a Keats letter that has come my way, but I have not had the good fortune to find even one that has not already been included in this collection. In this pursuit and in other relative matters I have increased my obligations to many of the old friends named above and incurred further debts of gratitude to others. To my list of creditors I must now add Signora Signorelli Cacciatore, Custodian of the Keats-Shelley Memorial House, Rome; Mr. R. C. Churchill; Mr. M. Wilson Disher; Mr. H. Field; Miss Elsa Forman, Secretary of the British Committee of the Keats-Shelley Memorial Fund; Mrs. Peter Gray; Miss R. Glynn Grylls; Miss Dorothy Hewlett; Colonel E. A. Penny; Mrs. Gladys Una Rimington; Mr. Kenneth Sisam; Mr. G. D. Summers. Last but not least I must record my thanks for frequent and unstinted help to Mr. J. H. Preston, Custodian of the Keats Collection, Hampstead, and to Professor William A. Jackson, Librarian of Harvard University, and Miss Mabel E. A. Steele, Custodian of the Keats Collection there.

It is worthy of note that in his report of accessions to the Houghton Library for the year ended 30 June 1950 Professor Jackson states that the Harvard Keats collection now contains eighty-one letters of Keats which he says from a page count represent the sources of 264 pages of the 1947 edition of this book. This is undoubtedly a 'world record' to which the British Museum takes second place with at least 132 pages of Keats's letters nearly all of them the gift of his sister's family in Spain after the death of their mother. They had been for many years in my father's keeping. He also had by him, on loan for publication

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in 1878, the letters to Fanny Brawne. He might then have secured them for a moderate price, but though Diana favoured him in the hunt for those treasures Fortuna failed him and when his work was done all save two passed into the hands of a dealer. Years later when I wanted to print them in accordance with modern practice I found they were scattered, some to private buyers, many in the sale rooms, and to this day I have only traced twenty-four of the total of thirty-nine.

To the few letters to Keats included in previous editions of this book I have added from the Harvard Collection one from George Keats to John and Thomas, and from the same source one from John's ardent admirer John Aitken of Dunbar. Although Lockhart is not once mentioned by Keats in his letters—indeed at one time he had come to the conclusion that Scott was the author of the Blackwood articles—the letter from Lockhart to Aitken given in the appendix seems to put the authorship beyond doubt. I am indebted to the Rev. C. R. S. Enys for his kind permission to publish it in full. Andrew Lang quoted extracts from it in his 'Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart', published in 1897, but he omitted, perhaps intentionally, the most important passage at the end of the second paragraph. I have also added in the appendix a specimen of the hoax played by Charles Jeremiah Wells on Tom Keats, a sickly boy in his sixteenth year (see pages 318 and 324-5), and the original French version of the Ronsard sonnet of which Keats sent a free translation to his friend Reynolds, see Letter 87, page 217.

M. B. F.

PRETORIA

15 May 1951

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- |          |           |   |
|----------|-----------|---|
| 1795.    | Oct. 31.  | Birth in Finsbury.  |
|          | Dec. 18.  | Christened at St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate.   |
| 1797.    | Feb. 28.  | Birth of his brother George.  |
| 1799.    | Nov. 18.  | Birth of his brother Thomas.  |
| 1801.    | Apr. 28.  | Birth of his brother Edward. (Died in infancy.)   |
| 1803.    | June 3.   | Birth of his sister Frances Mary (Fanny).   |
| 1804.    | Apr. 16.  | Death of his father: buried at St. Stephen's, Coleman Street, April 23.   |
|          | June 27.  | His mother marries William Rawlings at St. George's, Hanover Square.  |
| 1804-10. |           | Living with his grandmother, Mrs. Jennings, at Edmonton.  |
| 1810.    |           | Death of his mother: buried at St. Stephen's, March 20.   |
| 1803-11. |           | Educated at Clarke's School Enfield. Begins translating 'The Aeneid'.   |
| 1811.    | Summer.   | Apprenticed to Thomas Hammond, Surgeon. Finishes translation of 'The Aeneid'.   |
| 1812.    |           | Writes 'Imitation of Spenser'.  |
| 1813.    |           | Introduced to Severn.   |
| 1814.    | Dec.      | Death of his grandmother, Alice Jennings: buried at St. Stephen's, Dec. 19.   |
| 1815.    | Feb. 2.   | Writes Sonnet on the day Leigh Hunt left prison.  |
|          | Oct. 1.   | Entered at Guy's Hospital.  |
|          | Nov.      | Writes 'Epistle to George Felton Mathew'.   |
| 1816.    | May 5.    | First published poem, Sonnet, 'O Solitude!', appears in 'The Examiner'.   |
|          | June 29.  | Addresses a Sonnet to Charles Wells on receiving a bunch of roses.  |
|          | July 25.  | Takes the Apothecaries' Society's Certificate. Writes the Chapman's Homer Sonnet.   |
|          | Aug.      | At Margate with Tom. Writes 'Epistle to George Keats'.  |
|          | Sept.     | Writes 'Epistle to Charles Cowden Clarke'.  |
|          | Oct. Nov. | Meets Haydon and writes Sonnet to him.  |
|          | Dec. 1.   | Calls on Leigh Hunt with Cowden Clarke.   |
|          | Dec.      | Contemplates the subject of 'Endymion' and writes 'I stood tip-toe upon a little hill'. Meets Shelley and Horace Smith at Leigh Hunt's cottage. |
| 1817.    | Mar. 3.   | First book of 'Poems' published.  |
|          | Spring.   | Meets Taylor, Hessey, Woodhouse, and Bailey. Begins 'Endymion'.   |
|          | Apr. 15.  | At Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight.  |
|          | May.      | At Margate, where Tom Keats joins him.  |
|          | May 16.   | Goes to Canterbury with Tom.  |
|          | June 10.  | Back at Hampstead.  |

## CHRONOLOGY OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN

1817.     Sept.     With Bailey at Oxford.  
              Oct.     Visits Stratford-on-Avon and returns to Hampstead.  
              Nov. 28. Draft of 'Endymion' finished at Burford Bridge.  
              Dec.     Sees Kean return to the public and criticizes him in 'The Champion' of December 21.  
              Dec. 28. Haydon's 'immortal dinner': Keats, Wordsworth, Lamb, Kingston, &c., present.
- 1817-18.     Winters at Hampstead.
1818.     Jan. 3.     Calls on Wordsworth in Mortimer Street.  
              Jan.     Book I of 'Endymion' sent to press.  
              Jan.-Feb. Attends Hazlitt's Lectures.  
              Feb. 4.     Writes Sonnet to the Nile in competition with Shelley and Leigh Hunt.  
              Feb. 5.     Book II of 'Endymion', copying finished.  
              Feb 27.     Book III of 'Endymion', copying finished.  
              Mar. 14.     Joins Tom Keats at Teignmouth: Book IV of 'Endymion', copying finished.  
              Mar. 21.     Book IV with first preface and dedication sent to Taylor and Hessey.  
              Apr. 10.     Sends second preface for 'Endymion' to Reynolds.  
              Apr. 26-May 3. 'Endymion' published.  
              Apr. 27.     'Isabella, or the Pot of Basil' finished.  
              Mid-May.     Back at Hampstead with Tom.  
              May 19.     'Endymion' entered at Stationers' Hall.  
              June 22.     George Keats and his bride leave London for America, accompanied to Liverpool by Keats and Brown.  
                      Visits the Lakes with Brown.  
              July.     Scotch tour with Brown: flying visit to Ireland: catches violent cold in Isle of Mull, with throat ulcers.  
              July 2.     Writes 'Meg Merrilies'.  
              July 10.     Writes 'A Galloway Song'.  
              Aug. 7.     At Inverness waiting for smack for London.  
              Aug. 18.     Reaches Hampstead.  
              Sept.-Dec. At Well Walk, Hampstead.  
              Sept. 1.     'Cockney School' attack published in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for August. Attack published in 'Quarterly Review' (April and Dec.).  
              Sept.     Begins 'Hyperion'.  
                      Return of sore throat.  
                      First meeting with Fanny Brawne.  
              Dec. 1.     Death of Thomas Keats.  
                      Agrees to live with Brown at Wentworth Place.  
              Dec. 7.     Burial of Thomas Keats at St. Stephen's, Coleman Street.  
              Dec. 25.     Spends Christmas Day at Mrs. Brawne's: becomes engaged to Fanny.
1819.     Jan.     Stays at Chichester and Bedhampton: writes 'The Eve of St. Agnes'.

## THE LIFE OF JOHN KEATS

1819. Feb. Returns to Wentworth Place: persistent sore throat.  
 Feb. 13-17. Writes 'The Eve of St. Mark'.  
 April 11. Meets Coleridge at Hampstead.  
 April. Writes 'La Belle Dame sans Merci', 'Ode to Psyche', 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'.  
 May. Writes 'Ode to a Nightingale'.  
 June-July. Throat still sore.  
 July. Visits the Isle of Wight with Rice.  
 Writes 'Lamia', Part I.  
 Is joined by Brown and begins 'Otho the Great'.  
 'Ode to a Nightingale' published in 'Annals of the Fine Arts'.  
 July 25. (Sunday night). Probably wrote the 'Bright Star' Sonnet.  
 Aug. 12. Removes with Brown to Winchester.  
 'Otho the Great' finished.  
 Sept.-Dec. Working on 'The Fall of Hyperion'.  
 Sept. 5. 'Lamia' finished.  
 Sept. 10-15. Hurried visit to London and return to Winchester.  
 Reads Ariosto and resolves to work for periodicals.  
 Writes 'Ode to Autumn': revises 'The Eve of St. Agnes'.  
 Oct.-Nov. Writing 'The Cap and Bells'.  
 Oct. 8. Leaves Winchester for 25 College Street, Westminster.  
 Oct. 15 or 16. Returns to Hampstead: leaves off animal food.  
 Dec. Throat in threatening state again.  
 1820. Jan. 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' published in 'Annals of the Fine Arts'.  
 Feb. 3. Fatal illness begins.  
 May 7. Keats and Brown finally part at Gravesend.  
 May 10. 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' published in 'The Indicator'.  
 June-July. Stays at Kentish Town near and with Hunt.  
 June 22. Fresh attack of blood-spitting.  
 July 'Lamia, Isabella, &c.' published.  
 Aug. 12. Returns to Hampstead to be nursed by Mrs. and Miss Brawne.  
 Aug. 23. Four stanzas of 'The Cap and Bells' printed in 'The Indicator'.  
 Sept. 13. Leaves Hampstead for the last time.  
 Sept. 17. Goes aboard the 'Maria Crowther' in the London Docks.  
 Sept. 18. Sails from Gravesend with Severn. Contrary winds in Channel.  
 Sept. 28. Puts into Portsmouth. Keats and Severn visit the Snooks at Bedhampton.

## THE LIFE OF JOHN KEATS

1820. Sept. 29. Leaves Portsmouth. Contrary winds again.  
Goes ashore at Lulworth Cove, Dorset.  
Oct. 21. Reaches Naples: detained in quarantine.  
Nov. 1. Goes ashore at Naples.  
Nov. 4 or 5. Sets out for Rome in a hired carriage.  
Nov. 12. Reaches Terracina.  
Nov. 17 (?). Enters Rome by the Lateran Gate.  
Nov. 30. Writes his last letter.  
Dec. 10. Has a serious relapse.
1821. Feb. 23. His death.  
Feb. 26. His burial near the tomb of Caius Cestius.

# BIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA

CONCERNING

## KEATS'S CORRESPONDENTS

*By the late H. Buxton Forman, C.B., revised by the editor*

### GEORGE KEATS

George Keats, the second son of Thomas Keats and his wife Frances, born Jennings, was born on the 28th of February 1797, and brought up with his brother at Mr. John Clarke's school at Enfield. He was afterwards occupied for a time in the office of their guardian, Richard Abbey, tea merchant of Pancras Lane and of Walthamstow. There is little to record of his early life beyond what appears in the letters of the poet, as here set out and annotated. The summer visit to Paris with his invalid brother Tom and the winter flight to Teignmouth (1817-18) are the most important incidents apart from his courtship of Georgiana Wylie, whom he married in June 1818 and took to America. Thither he took what he could of the small fortune which came to him from his grandfather, and, settling at Louisville in Kentucky, fought out the battle of life till he realized a fortune and reared a family. Once only before his brother's death he came on a brief business visit to London (January 1820); and that was the last occasion on which he saw anything of his English kith and kin. Brown and Severn blamed him for not giving help to John out of the money he took away in 1820; but Dilke, the shrewdest and most judicial of the friends of Keats, regarded George's case for his own defence as clearly established. Moreover, George paid his brother's debts scrupulously and promptly. Some recollections of him by the Rev. James Freeman Clarke, first published in 'The Dial' for April 1843, and selections from his letters, are given in the Library edition of Keats's Works (London: Reeves and Turner, 1883). His personality stands out as that of a manly and high-minded fellow; and I for one have long ago dismissed the accusations of Brown and Severn as the outcome of prejudice.

Miss Naomi J. Kirk, of New Albany, Indiana, who has for some time been engaged in gathering materials for a life of George Keats, describes him as 'a prominent figure in the making of Louisville history . . . a force in politics. He served on the town council for several years . . . was active in promoting the first bridge over the Ohio . . . a stockholder in the Lexington and Ohio Railroad . . . instrumental in the revision of the school system . . . a prominent member of the Unitarian Church, and curator of the Lyceum . . . he was known more for his cultural attainments than for his wealth.' His wealth was the reward of his own exertions and enterprise. He invested in a lumber mill, became a skilled timber buyer, built and managed a flour mill, and dealt in real estate. From the same source comes definite information of George's end. As his first disaster in America resulted from a transaction concerning a boat with John James Audubon (see Letter 156, p. 339), so his last was connected with a shipping business bought



## BIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA CONCERNING

by the naturalist's brother-in-law, William Bakewell, with George Keats's backing. The business failed, both men were faced with bankruptcy, and George, already suffering from a cold, overworked to avert the crash, suddenly developed consumption, and died on the 24th of December 1841, three days after making his will.

George and Georgiana were good colonists; they had eight children, two sons and six daughters. Their eldest, Georgiana Emily, born in 1819, the

Little child  
O' the western wild,

apostrophized in the poem at p. 235 (Letter 94) of this volume, married Alfred Gwathmey and died in 1856; the second, Rosalind, born in 1820, predeceased her father; and the third, Emma Frances, 1823-83, married Philip Speed and was the mother of John Gilmer Speed, whose selections from Keats's writings were published in three volumes in New York in 1883. Then came Isabel, 1825-43, followed in 1827 by John Henry, who died in 1917 and whose son, or grandson, is said to be living now. Miss Alice L. Keats, the daughter of George Keats's sixth child, Clarence George (1830-61), tells me that her father died of rapid consumption, the third generation to fall a victim of that fell disease. Ella, the seventh child, was born in 1833, married George Peay, and died in 1888; and lastly in 1836 came Alice Ann who married Edward M. Drane and died in 1891.

## THOMAS KEATS

Of Thomas Keats, born on the 18th of November 1799, it is to be recorded that he also received his education at Mr. Clarke's school, was employed for a time in Mr. Abbey's office, was instrumental in bringing into the Keats story Charles Jeremiah Wells (1800-79), a school-fellow of his but not of his elder brothers', and was the unwitting cause also of the rupture between Keats and Wells which led to the most acrimonious utterances that we have from the poet. Wells fabricated a correspondence indicating that a fictitious lady ('Amena') was in love with Tom, whose chagrin on the discovery of the deception put upon him had a prejudicial effect on his already desperate state. William Michael Rossetti in his Pre-Raphaelite journal (1849-53) mentions a conversation with Wells's brother-in-law, William Smith Williams, who spoke of Wells as 'a most dangerous and insidious person', and of this affair he said in November 1850 that Wells induced Tom 'to go to France in the idea of meeting his correspondent'. Williams held the opinion that Wells's literary works were produced in the hope of pleasing Keats and winning him back; but I know of no record of Keats having seen either 'Stories after Nature' or 'Joseph and his Brethren' in manuscript, and they were not printed until after his death, the 'Stories' in 1822 and 'Joseph' in 1824. Tom Keats died of consumption at Hampstead on the 1st of December 1818 and was buried in the Church of St. Stephen, Coleman Street, on the 7th of December 1818. His brother George stated that there was no man living who understood John as well as Tom did.

## KEATS'S CORRESPONDENTS

### FRANCES MARY KEATS

Keats's only sister, always called Fanny, was born on the 3rd of June 1803, and after the death of her grandmother Jennings in December 1814 was looked after by Mr. and Mrs. Abbey when not at school. The addresses of Keats's letters to her show four names of schoolmistresses, Miss Tuckey, Miss Tucker, Miss Kaley, and Miss Caley. I suspect that there was really only one school—the Misses Tuckey's; these ladies had a large establishment and possibly Fanny lived at Miss Caley's, a much smaller house near by, when the Misses Tuckey had an overflow of pupils. (When Mary Ann Caley died in 1852 she was buried in the Tuckey vault in Walthamstow churchyard.) In the Abbey household Fanny had ample opportunity to learn self-control in difficult conditions. On attaining the age of 21 she had to invoke the aid of the law in order to obtain from Abbey her share of her grandfather's money. In this she was assisted by the intrepid Dilke. On the 30th of March 1826, at the Church of St. Luke, Chelsea, she married an accomplished Spanish gentleman, Señor Valentin Maria Llanos, who spoke and wrote English well, distinguished himself in the diplomatic service of his country, and was the author of 'Don Esteban' (for which Colburn paid him £200 in 1825 with the promise of another £100 if it went into a second edition), 'Sandoval the Freemason', 1826, and in 1828 'The Spanish Exile' (unpublished), works of fiction 'with a purpose' on the liberal side in politics. Gerald Griffin (1803-40) stated that Llanos was intimate with Keats and spoke with him three days before he died. Of the marriage there were four children, two sons and two daughters. One of the sons entered the civil service of Spain: the other, Don Juan Llanos y Keats, became a painter of distinction. Of the daughters, the Señorita Rosa attained to be an excellent musician: she had when I saw her a certain facial resemblance to the poet. The other daughter, the Countess Brockmann, was widowed when I visited the family in Madrid in 1885. Her daughter Elena was practising as a portrait-painter; she had a striking personality and very promising talents. Señora Llanos was greatly respected, and was an excellent manager in trying circumstances. Late in life, being less affluent than formerly, she allowed me to put in motion the necessary machinery for bringing her case before the first Lord of the Treasury for the grant of a Civil List pension. A moderate pension was awarded on Lord Beaconsfield's recommendation, and was of material assistance in her latter years. Señor Llanos died on the 14th of August 1885, aged nearly ninety—Señora Llanos on the 16th of December 1889, after a very short illness.

Keats's words about his sister's striking likeness to their brother Tom perhaps made one prone to find the resemblance: I certainly thought that she had a look, even in old age, of Severn's water-colour sketch of Tom; and a portrait<sup>1</sup> of her painted for me by her son Don Juan conveys perennially the same impression. The poet, as we know, was short, with a good chest and shoulders, whereas Brown (Houghton papers) records that Tom was 'very tall and very narrow chested'. I have seen no portrait representing their sister in youth. In middle life

<sup>1</sup> Now in the Keats House, Hampstead.

## BIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA CONCERNING

and old age she was a tall, erect, and well-developed woman. She deemed the portrait of her brother which Severn exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1819 an excellent likeness. She possessed one of the many replicas; and of this her grand-daughter Elena made for me an excellent copy in oils (not, of course, to be confused with the exquisite replica formerly owned by Thomas and Jane Hood<sup>1</sup>). Señora Llanos always held that her illustrious brother's *vera effigies* was only to be seen in perfection in the life-mask made by Haydon, of which she had a cast always by her. To illustrate this view she co-operated with her son Juan, or John as she sometimes called him, in posing the mask to the best advantage, and lovingly superintended the work while he made from it a delicate oil miniature in *grisaille* which she sent to me in a letter in the early days of our correspondence.

## GEORGIANA AUGUSTA WYLIE

### AFTERWARDS KEATS, AND LASTLY JEFFREY

Georgiana Augusta, George Keats's wife, was the daughter of James Wylie, Adjutant of the Fifeshire Regiment of Fencible Infantry. Unfortunately the details of her antecedents are but scanty. She counted for a great deal in the life of Keats at its healthiest period; and readers of the letters will see how much she went for later on, and as long as Keats could keep up any kind of interest in life. Her mother, also among the poet's correspondents, does not stand clearly before us; and I regret the shadowiness of her personality arising from lack of material to bring it before the reader. After George Keats's death his widow married John Jeffrey, who furnished Lord Houghton with much invaluable material, grossly mishandled, but rather through lack of aptness than want of goodwill. George Keats in one of his letters to Dilke refers to a family of the name of Griffin in Montreal as related to his wife; this family may have been connected with the Gerald Griffin mentioned elsewhere in these memoranda, as his eldest brother, an army officer, was stationed in Canada up to 1817 and his parents emigrated to America in 1820.

## CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE

Charles Cowden Clarke was born on the 15th of December 1787, at Enfield, where his father, John Clarke, kept a school. When Keats came to the school as a child of six or seven, young Clarke, fourteen or fifteen years old, gave him much of the elementary part of his education, helping later to form his tastes. Clarke was devoted to music, and an enthusiastic playgoer, his prime histrionic favourites being Edmund Kean, Mrs. Siddons, and Miss O'Neill. At the time of his literary *début*, in Leigh Hunt's 'Literary Pocket Book', he was living at Ramsgate, whither his parents had moved on giving up the school. Returning to London after his father's death (1820), he started as a publisher and bookseller in partnership with Henry Hunt. The firm,

<sup>1</sup> Now in the Keats House, Hampstead.

## KEATS'S CORRESPONDENTS

known as Hunt and Clarke, failed in 1829, involving Hazlitt in a loss of £200 on his 'Napoleon', and Clarke joined Alfred Novello as a music publisher. He married his partner's sister, Mary Victoria Novello (well known as Mary Cowden Clarke of the Shakespeare Concordance). He wrote theatrical articles and art-criticisms for the 'Atlas' and 'Examiner' newspapers, published 'Readings in Natural Philosophy' (1828), 'Tales from Chaucer' (1833), 'Adam the Gardener', a book for boys (1834), in which he refers to 'my old friend Mr. Keats' and here and there quotes lines from his poems, and 'The Riches of Chaucer' (1835), giving in the memoir of Chaucer an account of how Keats wrote 'The Floure and the Lefe' sonnet. It was about this time that he became a public lecturer on Shakespeare and other poets. He was an excellent lecturer in all respects, and did much in this way up to 1856 in popularizing the national study of Shakespeare—also publishing many of his lectures. When Haydon's 'Autobiography' was published in 1853 Clarke at once protested in 'The Examiner' (9 July) against the painter's allegation of Keats's intemperate habits and declined to believe the cayenne pepper story. In 1859 a volume of his own verses was issued, under the title of 'Carmina Minima'. It was he who was responsible for the texts of the popular series of British Poets known as Gilfillan's Poets. In conjunction with his wife he wrote 'Recollections of Writers' (in which is included, with revisions, C.C.C.'s 'Recollections of John Keats', first printed in 'The Gentleman's Magazine' for February 1874) and 'The Shakespeare Key', published in 1878 and 1879 respectively. They went to live at Nice, together with Alfred and Sabilla Novello, in 1856; and from 1861 till his death they lived at Villa Novello, Genoa. There he died on the 13th of March 1877, beloved, respected, leaving a pleasant memory and a great mass of work over and above that already specified—useful work, if not greatly distinguished—and above all the record of a happy and beneficent life. A four-page list of 'Works by Charles and Mary Cowden-Clarke' is printed at the end of Mrs. Clarke's 'My Long Life' (second edition, 1896). Mrs. Cowden Clarke died in 1898.

## LEIGH HUNT

Of James Henry Leigh Hunt it is not necessary to say much here. He figures so prominently throughout this volume, and has left such full records of himself, so generally known, that it should suffice to mark his eleven years' seniority to Keats by noting that he was born on the 19th of October 1784, and to refer the reader to 'The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt; with Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries', 3 vols., 1850, to a new edition of this book 'Revised by the Author; with further Revision, and an Introduction, by his eldest Son' [Thornton Hunt], 1 vol., 1860, to 'The Correspondence of Leigh Hunt', edited by his eldest son, 2 vols., 1862, and to Mr. Edmund Blunden's comprehensive and sympathetic 'Leigh Hunt, A Biography', 1 vol., 1930. It may be added that he lived long, produced enormously, was the first brief biographer of Keats (in 'Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries', 1828), and was ever faithful to his affection for his friend. He died on the 28th of August 1859.

## BIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA CONCERNING

### PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Of Shelley also it scarcely seems needful to set down here much more than the dates of his birth and death and to refer those who want brief biographical details to the ordinary sources of information, and those who want full particulars to Dowden's *Life* in two large volumes (1886). For present purposes it should suffice to point out that, born on the 4th of August 1792, he was more than three years Keats's senior, that when Keats and he became acquainted he had separated from Harriet and taken Mary as his life's partner, and that he survived Keats by less than a year and a half, having been drowned on the 8th of July 1822. Of his immortal 'Adonais, an Elegy on the Death of John Keats', coupled with the fact that his ashes were buried not far from the grave of Keats at Rome, the barest record is enough.

### JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS

John Hamilton Reynolds, on the whole the most congenial of Keats's correspondents outside his family, was born at Shrewsbury on the 9th of September 1794 and was baptized on the 29th of the same month.<sup>1</sup> He entered Shrewsbury School in 1803, and when his father left Shrewsbury in the beginning of 1806 to take up the post of head writing-master at Christ's Hospital, John was sent to St. Paul's School, being admitted on the 4th of March 1806. Reynolds was a year older than Keats and, at the time of their first acquaintance (at Hunt's cottage in the Vale of Health), he had been some time in business as a clerk in the employ of the Amicable Society for a Perpetual Assurance Office, and was, so to speak, a seasoned author. He had published in 'The Gentleman's Magazine' in February 1813 a poem to his sister Jane on her birthday; in 1814 'Safie, an Eastern Tale', dedicated to (and imitative of) Lord Byron, and 'The Eden of Imagination', which owed more to the diverse influences of Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt; and in 1815 he had put forth a strange pamphlet called 'An Ode'. The three books were issued by John Martin of Holles Street; but his next work was published by Taylor and Hessey. This was 'The Naiad: a Tale' (with other poems, 1816), dedicated to Haydon 'by one who admires his genius and values his friendship'. He probably wrote the review of Keats's first book in 'The Champion' for the 9th of March 1817, and in 'The Alfred, West of England Journal' for the 6th of October 1818 he defended his friend against the 'Quarterly Review' attack. It was Reynolds who made Keats known to Rice, Dilke, and Brown. In the course of Keats's Letters will be found the story of Reynolds's pamphlet, 'Peter Bell, a Lyrical Ballad', issued anonymously, of course, as the jocular intention was to personate Wordsworth; three editions were printed in 1819. His farce, 'One, Two, Three, Four, Five; By Advertisement', was also produced in

<sup>1</sup> Verified from the register of St. Mary's Parish, Shrewsbury, by Mr. George L. Marsh, see his 'John Hamilton Reynolds: Poetry and Prose', Oxford University Press, 1928, p. 9. Mr. Marsh also ascertained from the records of the Amicable Society that Reynolds had been employed there from July 1810 and remained 'at any rate until April 1816'.

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1819: printed copies of it, undated, are 'from the acting copy' and form No. 236 of 'Cumberland's British Theatre'. In 1820 Taylor and Hessey published a highly amusing and brilliant work from his pen entitled 'The Fancy: A Selection from the Poetical Remains of the late Peter Corcoran . . . with a brief Memoir of his Life'. Reynolds was, however, 'called off' from his allegiance to the Muse by an opportunity of entering the office of Mr. Fladgate and becoming a Solicitor—an offer which promised advantage, but was incompatible with *avowed* literary pursuits. His sonnet bidding Farewell to the Muses (p. 177 *post*) is delightful. After that farewell he published his most important volume 'The Garden of Florence; and other Poems' (1821), in which he gave his name as 'John Hamilton' only; and, apart from this, he never wholly desisted from literature for very long. His contributions to periodical literature extend to a later period in his life; his writings may be found in 'The London Magazine', 'The Athenæum' (of which for a while he was, with Dilke, part proprietor), 'The New Monthly Magazine', 'Bentley's Miscellany', and 'Ainsworth's Magazine'. His sister Charlotte told me that he provided Charles Mathews with words for his popular entertainments. She did not specify which; and there is no evidence that Reynolds had a hand in more than three, his collaborators being James Smith in one and a Mr. Peake in the others. Reynolds participated with Thomas Hood in writing the notable little anonymous book 'Odes and Addresses to Great People', which went through three editions, two in 1825 and one in 1826. More than once have the 'Odes and Addresses' been apportioned between Hood and Reynolds on more or less trustworthy authority. Having in my library a copy of the third edition with the authorship of each poem marked in the writing of Hood, I think it well to state here that those ascribed to Reynolds by his coadjutor and brother-in-law are the

Ode to Mr. M'Adam,  
Address to Mr. Dymoke,  
Address to Sylvanus Urban, Esquire,  
Ode to R. W. Elliston, Esquire, and  
Address to . . . the Dean and Chapter of Westminster;

while the Address to Maria Darlington is stated by Hood to be 'a Joint Production of Thomas Hood and John Hamilton Reynolds'. Mr. Marsh, in his book already mentioned, points out that in the copy of the 'Odes' given by Reynolds to Monckton Milnes, the donor, agreeing with Hood about those six poems, claims a share in five others, namely:

Ode to Mr. Graham,  
Ode to Joseph Grimaldi,  
Address to the Steam Washing Company,  
Ode to Captain Parry,  
Ode to W. Kitchener, M.D.

Miss Charlotte Reynolds confirmed Hood's ascriptions save in one particular: she thought her brother was alone responsible for the Address to Maria Darlington. She also told me—and that positively—that the poem 'Sally Brown' was written by Hood and Reynolds,

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alternate stanzas being from the pen of each poet. Reynolds had married Miss Eliza Powell Drewe on the 31st of August 1822, and had stuck more or less to business for a while. The witty and lovable James Rice, of whom we know so little and desire to know so much, paid his expenses of admission as a solicitor, took him into partnership, and relinquished a good practice for him to follow alone; but Reynolds gave it up prematurely. Perhaps 'the Muses' tempted him; but, be that as it may, he did not rise to greatness in literature; and his second farce, 'Confounded Foreigners' (first acted in January 1838 and 'printed from the prompter's copy' as No. 32 of 'Websters Acting National Drama'), is not as amusing as it should be. A full account of the assistance given by Reynolds to Monckton Milnes in the preparation of 'The Life and Letters of John Keats' is given by Mr. Marsh in 'Poetry and Prose', together with the relative correspondence. From about 1846-7 to the end of his life Reynolds resided in the Isle of Wight, where he obtained the post of Clerk to the County Court. He was one of the original members of the Garrick Club, which he seems to have made his home whenever he could get away from the 'primrose island'; he gave up his membership in January 1852. His death took place at Node Hill, Newport, on the 15th of November 1852. There is a photogravure of Severn's miniature of Reynolds in 'Poetry and Prose by John Keats' (Reeves and Turner, 1890), and a reproduction of the contemporary silhouette in the Keats Museum, Hampstead, accompanies Mr. Willard B. Pope's article on Reynolds in 'Wessex', vol. iii, no. 2 (Pilgrim Press, Southampton, 1935).

## JANE AND MARIANE REYNOLDS

Jane Reynolds was born on the 6th of November 1792, and on the 5th of May 1825 was married to Thomas Hood at the Church of St. Botolph, Aldersgate, the Rev. Edward Rice officiating. 'James Rice, Junr.' was one of the witnesses to the ceremony. It has been said that the marriage was opposed by her family as imprudent; but all who read the 'Memorials of Thomas Hood' published in 1860 will be convinced that the union was a happy one, however hapless the struggles and premature death of the poet, and the late Walter Jerrold in 'Thomas Hood: his Life and Times' (1907) printed letters which certainly belie the suggestion. Misfortune but drew the couple closer together. It was the first-fruit of this union that called forth Lamb's poem 'On an Infant dying as soon as born'. Later (in 1830), at Winchmore Hill, Middlesex, Mrs. Hood gave birth to a daughter, Frances Freeling—afterwards known in the world of letters by her married name of Frances Freeling Broderip. On the 19th of January 1835, at Lake House, Wanstead, Thomas Hood Junior was born. From 1835 to 1838, the Hoods were abroad. On the 3rd of May 1845 Hood died at Devonshire Lodge, Finchley Road; and on the 4th of December in the following year Jane Hood also died. Thomas Hood, junior, died in 1874 and Mrs. Broderip in 1878. The portraits of Thomas and Jane Hood, bought from their son's widow, are in the National Portrait Gallery.

Mariane and Jane Reynolds were, as shown by his letters, on very friendly and pleasant terms with Keats. Mariane was born on the

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23rd of February 1797 (?) and baptized on the 27th of April 1797. Jane was, it will be seen, aged nearly 25 and her sister 20½ when Keats wrote them the first of the extant letters. Eliza Reynolds and Charlotte, the only one of the family whom I knew, were in their teens. Mariane married Henry Gibson Green of Islington, and was the mother of the two distinguished artists Charles and Townley Green, both deceased. Mrs. Green herself had a troublous life, bravely lived. She died on the 7th of January 1874, leaving an unmarried daughter (Marian) as well as the brother painters.

## CHARLOTTE REYNOLDS THE ELDER

Of Charlotte Reynolds the elder—Mrs. Reynolds, the mother of Jane, John, Mariane, Eliza, and Charlotte the younger—I know little beyond the fact that she also was among Keats's correspondents, that her maiden name was Cox, that she was born on the 15th of November 1761, and that she died on the 13th of May 1848. She published at least one book, 'Mrs. Leslie and her Grandchildren', 1827, praised heartily by Lamb. To her youngest daughter Charlotte, who was born on the 12th of May 1802 and died on the 26th of October 1884 in the house of the Green brothers at Hampstead, I was indebted for much information.<sup>1</sup> She loved to relate how her brother-in-law Hood had made her the heroine of his comic poem 'Number One: Versified from the Prose of a Young Lady', and had drawn a caricature of her at the head of it. She still had her 'single lot on hand' to the last, and never seemed to regret the circumstance.

## BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON

Benjamin Robert Haydon, who like Keats's father came from the West Country, was, at the time of his acquaintance with the poet, a portent of energy, enthusiasm, ambition, and egotism. Although as a painter he showed sparks of the sacred fire and possessed in fact something akin to genius, his life-work suffered from defects of judgement, a faulty sense of proportion, and a total want of humour.

<sup>1</sup> The information furnished to my father by Charlotte Reynolds when she was eighty-one years of age included the dates of birth of John, Jane, and Mariane; and the Rev. C. E. Jarman, Vicar of St. Mary's, Shrewsbury, has kindly given me the following baptismal dates from the Church registers:—Mariane, 27th of April 1797; Eliza Bashford Reynolds, 20th of November 1799; Charlotte, 16th of May 1802. Jane Reynolds unfortunately does not figure in the Shrewsbury registers, but seeing that John's birthday on the 9th of September 1794 has been verified from that source, it is clear that she cannot have been born on the 6th of November in the same year as stated by Charlotte. This discrepancy, taken in conjunction with the baptismal records, casts doubt on the accuracy of the younger sister's data. The announcement of Hood's marriage in the 'London Magazine' throws light on the question, for there Jane is described as 'the eldest daughter', a statement supported by the facts that Keats puts her first when writing to Jane and Mariane and that the inscription on the Hood monument, erected in Kensal Green cemetery in 1854, declares that she was born on the 6th of November 1792. From the information available to me I have felt obliged to rearrange the family thus—Jane, John, Mariane, Eliza, Charlotte.



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Haydon was the son of a stationer at Plymouth, where he was born on the 26th of January 1786. At the time when Keats became excited at the bare thought of coming face to face with 'this glorious Haydon and all his creation', the painter was, it will be seen, nearly 31 years old—the poet just 21. Haydon's story is too well known to need telling in detail here. He had come to London and become a student at the Royal Academy as early as 1804; and in 1807 he showed his first picture. This was 'The Repose of the Holy Family in Egypt', hung at the Royal Academy. The next picture exhibited was 'Dentatus'. The hanging of these two works led to a quarrel between Haydon and the authorities; indeed this remarkable man's arrogance and impetuosity led him to quarrel alike with patrons, friends, and critics; and, even when forced to take to portrait painting, he scorned to temporize or humour his subjects. Among the most notable of his huge canvases were 'The Judgement of Solomon', 'The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem' (into which Haydon put portraits of Keats, Wordsworth, and other friends), 'The Raising of Lazarus' (which has a home in our National Gallery, Millbank), 'The Crucifixion', and 'Xenophon and the Ten Thousand seeing the Sea'. 'Napoleon at St. Helena' and 'The Reform Banquet' should also be mentioned, and that 'Mock Election' which he painted when in prison for debt the second time, and which was bought by George IV. Haydon failed to realize the lessons of life: when he broke out in 1827 with 'my "Judgment of Solomon"' is now in a warehouse in the Borough; my "Entry into Jerusalem" is doubled up in a back room in Holborn; my "Lazarus" is in an upholsterer's shop in Mount Street, and my "Crucifixion" in a hay-loft in Lisson Grove—he had missed the point of it all. He was not wanted for the purpose to which he insisted on devoting his egregious vitality; but he was a powerful and untiring propagandist, a good writer, a splendid lecturer; and he succeeded in making the Nation buy the Elgin Marbles.

The long row of folio volumes forming his illustrated manuscript journal is a monumental reflection of his strange personality. The works based upon the journal by Tom Taylor and Frederic Wordsworth Haydon<sup>1</sup> teem with a fascinating psychological interest, though they are not good books. His scattered essays are generally excellent reading, and full of instruction; and in one book he comes down to posterity associated with no less a luminary than William Hazlitt. That book is the agreeable volume in which, in 1838, Messrs. Adam and Charles Black republished from the seventh edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' Hazlitt's Essay on the Fine Arts and Haydon's on Painting. On the 10th of October 1821, in the face of his customary financial difficulties, Haydon married a Cornish lady, Mary Hyman, already the mother of two children by her first husband, and by whom he left two sons and a daughter.

In 1836 he was finishing a picture of quite moderate size for him,

<sup>1</sup> 'Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon, Historical Painter, from his Autobiography and Journals', edited and compiled by Tom Taylor. 3 vols., London: Longmans, 1853; second edition, with additions, 1853; and 'Benjamin Robert Haydon: Correspondence and Table-Talk', with a memoir by his son, Frederic Wordsworth Haydon. 2 vols., London: Chatto & Windus, 1876.

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representing the Black Prince thanking Lord Audley at the close of the battle of Poitiers; and he wrote to J. R. Planché ('Recollections and Reflections', 1872, volume i, pages 229-30) for certain information on matters of costume—so careful was he in such particulars. The picture had been commissioned by a descendant of Audley, contained numerous portraits of Audleys then living, and was certainly a most striking production—none the worse, I suspect, for the comparative modesty of its size. Nevertheless, it must have measured at least 18 feet by 12, and it was probably found inconvenient to the house of Audley. At all events the whirligig of time brought it to Haydon's own county about the year 1858. That is how I come to speak of it as a thing seen. My father's friend, Mr. John Whiteway of Fishwick, on the Teign, who had a collection of fine old pictures, bought this one of Haydon's in London, and brought it home (a year or two before I left the county) for a birthday present to his wife. She kept it till the end of her long life; but I shall never forget her graphic account of its arrival at Fishwick and of the removal of a large window in the drawing room in order to get the picture into the house. This scrap of gossip is, I venture to think, an apt illustration of Haydon's failure in life. There was no place in little England for such canvases as his; and this was but a small one. Although he had in his time succeeded in drawing crowds to see his work, his crowning misfortune was a failure in that kind: he attempted to show his 'Banishment of Aristides' and his 'Nero Playing while Rome was in Flames'. In the same building, 'General Tom Thumb' was exhibiting his ludicrous small person; and, although a week's visitors to Haydon's show numbered but 133, the dwarf received the attentions and the gate-money of 120,000 persons in the same period. At length Haydon's colossal fighting prowess collapsed: on the 22nd of June 1846 he ended his eventful career by shooting himself.

## WILLIAM HASLAM

The main sources of information about William Haslam are Sharp's 'Life and Letters of Joseph Severn' (1892) and the letters of John Keats, and in these stands out clearly the picture of one who from his early manhood not only quietly and unobtrusively showed devotion to a friend of his own age, but one who was also ready at all times to serve him. Haslam, according to Sharp, was born in 1795 and apparently became acquainted with Keats before most of the friends who figure more prominently in the poet's correspondence. We find him anxious about Keats when he was nursing his dying brother and warning Severn of the danger of such constant proximity to the invalid; sending his friend game; keeping in touch with Tom while John was away; invariably acting as mail agent for the dispatch of American letters; 'always doing me some good turn', 'a most kind and obliging and constant friend', to use Keats's own words; and it was Haslam, too, who relieved Keats of the sad duty of informing George of Tom's death. It is true that there was trouble on two occasions about the treatment of certain letters sent to him for some specific purpose, but although Keats was irritated at the time, the incidents did not rankle and the friendship was not disturbed. In March 1819 Haslam lost

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his father, to whose position in the firm of Frampton and Sons he was promoted. About this time he was living not far from the Framptons at Bethnal Green. Becoming engaged shortly afterwards, he seems to have been less in touch with Keats for a while, but directly there was urgent need for action he was to the fore again, and it was he who suggested to Severn that he should accompany Keats to Italy. Nor did he forget his friend after they had said good-bye at Gravesend. On the 4th of December 1820 he wrote to Severn warning him not to speak to John of George, about whom he shared Charles Brown's opinion, and adding, 'Keats must get himself well again, Severn, if but for us. I, for one, cannot afford to lose him. If I know what it is to love, I truly love John Keats.'

In 1838 Brown dined with Haslam and found him living 'like a most prosperous man', with a wife and daughter, 'the latter a nice girl of about 16'. In 1847 he assisted Monckton Milnes in his work on 'The Life and Letters'. The only fault to be found in him is that he did not preserve his friend's letters with the care that is bestowed on them to-day, yet in that respect he does not stand alone. In explanation of this and of the fact that this collection contains only two letters and a fragment of a letter from Keats to him, Lord Crewe has kindly allowed me to print the following letter to his father dated from Copthall Court, the 5th of February 1847:

Dear Sir,

I am favoured with your note of yesterday. I was gratified to hear lately from Mr. Severn that you were certainly proceeding with a memoir of John Keats, and I immediately looked up such letters as I cou'd find and about three weeks ago called upon Mr. Severn with them—went generally over them, and begged of him to arrange for my seeing you with him, as soon as might be after you shou'd come to London—He is a sad fellow—and having heard nothing from him, I wrote to him three days ago.

I regret that engagements for tomorrow will preclude my waiting upon you as requested—but I write to Severn to beg that he will see you and arrange for my meeting you and himself on Wednesday or on Thursday either at your residence or at his own, and I will request of *you* if you please to inform me what arrangement is made—The hour wou'd suit me perfectly well, or I wou'd make it eleven or twelve if you wou'd rather.

The letters I have are Severn's letters written from the Downs—on the voyage and after their arrival. Letters of Keats I have found none—They probably were so well, or intended to be so well taken care of, that every endeavour to lay my hand upon them has proved unavailing.—Severn's however are highly interesting.

I remain, Dear Sir,  
Yours faithfully

W. Haslam.

Haslam died on the 28th of March 1851. His wife, Mary Haslam, less than a year later wrote that he broke down under the heavy pressure of business and financial embarrassments but that 'his end was peace'. Sharp says that his sister, whom Keats seems to have known, was living in Paris in 1876. His daughter, Annette Augusta Haslam, was

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living in London in 1883 and was in correspondence with Severn up to the time of his death.

### JOSEPH SEVERN

Joseph Severn was the son of a musician, James Severn, and was born on the 7th of December 1793 at Hoxton. He showed a taste for drawing at an early age; and his father, *faute de mieux*, apprenticed him to an engraver. To engraving he did not take kindly; and he somehow managed to get an easel, colours, and brushes and to attend occasionally at the schools of the Royal Academy. In 1816 his enthusiasm was battling with his want of means; but his acquaintance with Keats fired him with redoubled ambition; and when in 1817 the Academy announced a students' competition for a gold medal, to be awarded for the best historical painting on a subject from Spenser, Severn sold his watch and books to buy the necessary material, competed, and won. His picture was 'The Cave of Despair'. His next, 'Hermia and Helena', was accepted and exhibited by the Academy, but not much noticed. His growing friendship with Hunt, Reynolds, Keats, and Charles Brown helped to form his tastes; and when, in 1820, he complied with Haslam's suggestion that he should go with Keats to Rome, he was probably wiser than his father thought. That impulsive gentleman is said to have knocked him down, on account of the supposed injury to his prospects. After Keats's death Severn set to work to finish the picture of 'The Death of Alcibiades' which he had left undone for Keats's sake. He obtained through this picture a three years' travelling premium of £130; and the Academy refunded the expenses of his visit to Rome. Severn did not progress steadily as an artist after these early successes; but his many portraits of Keats are highly treasured, especially the earlier ones; with rare exceptions, the posthumous ones are of little interest or merit; his work, however, found a certain acceptance for the sake of the poet at whose deathbed he had attended so devotedly. He lived a great part of his life at Rome. In 1828 he married Elizabeth, daughter of Archibald, Lord Montgomerie; and he had by her several children, three of whom grew up to distinguish themselves as artists, among them Arthur Severn, who married Ruskin's cousin, and was his housemate at Brantwood till Ruskin died. One of his commissions was a picture of the Coliseum with Shelley in a prominent position, painted for Sir Percy Florence Shelley; and he projected, but did not execute, an illustrated edition of 'Adonais'—a poem in which he was anxious to appropriate to himself the portrait of Leigh Hunt, though Shelley had apologized in the preface for Severn's absence from the poem. In 1841 he returned to England for the sake of his children's education, and remained some 19 years. In 1860 he obtained the British Consulship at Rome. This he held till 1872, when he was superannuated. He died at Rome on the 3rd of August 1879, and was buried beside Keats.

### BENJAMIN BAILEY

Of Benjamin Bailey, who, judged by the standard of sympathy and receptiveness, must be regarded as one of Keats's most important

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correspondents, very little is publicly known save through the biographies of the poet. From Mr. Joseph Foster's 'Alumni Oxonienses' it appears that he was the son of Mr. John Bailey of Thorney in Cambridgeshire. He was born on the 5th of June 1791, and matriculated from Magdalen Hall on the 19th of October 1816. He was an Oxford undergraduate, reading for the Church, when Keats made his acquaintance; and at that time he was a distinctly 'bookish' young man. Milton and Wordsworth were his supreme favourites; and it seems to have escaped the narrators that he actually produced a small printed work illustrative of his love for Wordsworth.

It will be remembered that Keats stayed with Bailey at Oxford for some weeks of the long vacation of 1817, and there wrote the Third Book of 'Endymion', finding plenty of time to enjoy with his friend constant excursions on foot and by boat up and down the Isis, revelling in the beauties of nature, and indulging in high talk on great subjects. Before Bailey was ordained and married, he visited Stratford-on-Avon with Keats. He obtained a curacy in the neighbourhood of Carlisle at the end of 1817. In 1818 he defended Keats in 'The Oxford Herald' (for the 30th of May and 6th of June). In 1819 he was married to a daughter of the Bishop of Stirling—a sister of Robert Gleig, the author (later on) of 'The Subaltern', &c., and Chaplain-General of the Forces—and in the same year he became Vicar of Dallington in Northamptonshire. In 1827 he must have been at Townfield in Scotland, as two extant sonnets by him bear the name of that place with the date July 1827. In 1831 he became senior Colonial Chaplain of Ceylon and was stationed at Colombo, of which place he was appointed Archdeacon on the 27th of February 1846; and in 1847 he took the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He must have lost his wife not later than 1837 as in that year he printed at Colombo a twenty-four page pamphlet entitled 'Stanzas to my Daughter on her Birthday: with my own portrait', in which he refers to the child as 'motherless'. Shortly before his death he returned to England; he died at Nottingham Place, Marylebone, on the 25th of June 1853.

In the year 1876 I purchased, among some pamphlets which appeared to be 'Athenæum' clearings, and then mislaid, an anonymous tract—a single post 8vo sheet in a plain grey wrapper—with a manuscript inscription connecting it with Bailey. Its title is 'Lines | Addressed to | William Wordsworth Esq.' The title-page bears an epigraph from the seventh Satire of Juvenal and the imprint 'Ceylon, | Colombo—: Printed at the Wesleyan Mission Press. | 1835'. On the fly-leaf is written, in that hand which 'looks illegible and may perchance be read', the following inscription to Keats's other friend and correspondent whose writing 'looks very legible and may perchance not be read'—'C. Dilke Esq. with the kind regards of B. Bailey. Colombo. Jany. 1836. The first of these poems is by the Honble. Mr. Serjt. Rough, Senior Puisne Justice of Ceylon—the rest by me.—They may, if wished, be reprinted in the *Athenæum*, if not done so already. B.B.' The columns of that paper for 1835 and 1836 show no trace of the reprint thus authorized. Mr. Serjeant Rough's effusion consists of seven long stanzas of a very poor kind. Bailey's remainder is less ambitious, and much better; and the place which the worthy ecclesiastic now takes in the records of Keats's life confers on this

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memorial of his enthusiasm a literary interest. His part of the pamphlet is but six pages, containing four sonnets and two smaller pieces of eight lines each. I rediscovered my discovery in 1886 and communicated it to the Editor of the 'Athenæum', who, availing himself of the permission given half a century earlier, reprinted one of the sonnets. The tiny tract closes with the following lines written in 1827 'On a Portrait of Wordsworth':

Though sadness seem to dwell upon his face,  
It is of Thought the 'melancholy grace':  
Deep Thought is seated on that ample brow,  
And sheds a grandeur on the face below;  
A countenance serene, where feelings mild  
With high imagination mingle: Child,  
And Youth, and Manhood—every age we trace  
Depicted in his WORKS, and in his FACE.

In 1831 Bailey had published 'Poetical Sketches in the South of France', and in addition to these efforts in verse he wrote books on religious subjects and some of his sermons were printed in Ceylon. Another event of the year 1831 which must have been a pleasure to Bailey was the visit of Maria Jane Jewsbury, who had just married the Rev. William Kew Fletcher. The Fletchers stayed with him for a fortnight, and Mrs. Fletcher wrote to Dora Wordsworth describing Bailey as 'such a Wordsworthian as I have rarely if ever met—every edition of your father is here—filled with m.s. notes'.<sup>1</sup> One Wordsworth quarto, 'The Excursion', she took away inscribed to her by her host: it is now in the collection of Mr. John M. Turnbull in South Africa.

Keats had an excessively high opinion of Bailey's character at first; and I think he must have retained it in the main, although his criticism of his friend's inconstancy in love affairs, written to his brother and sister-in-law in March 1819, is full and unsparing. He wrote to Bailey in August 1819 somewhat coldly, to judge from the portion of the letter which is extant (see Letter 142): still, he congratulated him on his marriage, and said things which he could not have said sincerely if he had not resolved to condone what he regarded as an offence to womankind in Bailey's behaviour. As Keats was incapable of hypocrisy, I think we must take his final judgement of Bailey to be that he was 'one of the noblest men alive' (see Letter 37), but fickle in his attentions to women in the days of his bachelorhood—a defect which Keats might well, writing certain phrases which he did to George and Georgiana, regard as cured by his marriage. It is not improbable that Keats was misinformed about Bailey's 'trying at Miss Martin' (see Letter 123, page 303) for Miss Martin married another Bailey, an upholsterer of London, whose Christian name was Edward.

## JAMES RICE

The personality of James Rice is vividly alive in Keats's letters; and yet there is scarcely anything to say about his annals, beyond

<sup>1</sup> See 'Maria Jane Jewsbury: Occasional Papers, selected with a Memoir by Eric Gillett': Oxford University Press, 1932.

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the bare record that he was not alive at the end of 1833. Witty and generous in the extreme, he appears to have been a general favourite, and one who impressed others as in some sense fortunate, despite his miserable health—concerning which Keats, going to inquire on one occasion, reported to his brothers (Letter 40, p. 86) that 'lo! Master Jemmy had been to the play the night before and was out at the time—he always comes on his Legs like a Cat'. Rice was educated for the law; and the reader will see from the note to Letter 76 (pp. 175-6) how liberal a soul that of James Rice was. But there must have been something very notable about the man of whom two such opposites as Keats and Dilke, both so unusually capable of judging character, agreed in employing terms of enthusiastic laudation. It was not for nothing that Keats imported into his criticism of Bailey's love affairs the fact that James Rice, the witty, the gay, the glib-tongued, had for his own satisfaction sat in judgement: 'Rice would not make an immature resolve: he was ardent in his friendship for Bailey, he examined the whole for and against minutely; and he has abandoned Bailey entirely.' It was not for nothing that Keats was at the time more swayed against Bailey by this than anything else; not for nothing that he told his brother in September 1819 (p. 400) that Rice was 'the most sensible, and even wise Man' he knew—with 'a few John Bull prejudices, but they improve him'; and assuredly it was not for nothing that Dilke, the shrewd, the keen, the far-seeing, spoke of him as 'dear generous noble James Rice—the best, and in his quaint way one of the wittiest and wisest men I ever knew'. Dilke printed a few of Rice's whimsicalities in 'The Athenæum'. Reynolds, whose affection and esteem had borne the hard test of considerable obligation, wrote to Lord Houghton when the 'Life, Letters &c.' was in preparation that Rice had been 'a *very* kind friend to him', adding—'He was a quiet true wit—extremely well read—had great taste and a sound judgement. For every quality that marks the sensible companion—the valuable Friend—the gentleman, and the Man—I have known no one to surpass him.' How gladly would we see a few of his letters, and realize his outer man by means of a fine portrait! There is a silhouette, and also a miniature in water-colours, of Rice in the Leigh Browne-Lockyer collection in the Keats Museum; which also contains letters, relics, and commonplace-books relating to Rice, Bailey, and Reynolds.

## CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE

Charles Wentworth Dilke, born on the 8th of December 1789, made his start in life as a clerk in the Navy Pay Office, and employed his leisure in the study of English literature, especially of the elder dramatists. By the time Keats had come to years of discretion, Dilke had already brought out in the years 1814 to 1816 an admirably edited series of volumes supplementary to Dodsley's Collection of Old Plays, and had married and settled at Hampstead. When Keats made his acquaintance he was living at Wentworth Place with his wife and his son Charles, born in 1810, and afterwards created a baronet. He was a contributor to 'The London Magazine', 'The London Review', 'The Champion', 'The Retrospective Review', and in 1821 advocated

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the repeal of the corn laws in a letter addressed to Lord John Russell, published as a pamphlet. 'The Athenæum', established by Silk Buckingham in 1828, was in failing health at the end of 1829. Dilke came to its rescue, taking complete editorial control in 1830, and greatly influencing the management on behalf of the proprietors, who, besides himself and the printer, seem to have been John Hamilton Reynolds, Thomas Hood, and Allan Cunningham. These, alarmed by his bold measures, such as reduction of price, withdrew from the venture, save as contributors, and left Dilke and the printer alone to establish, successfully, an independent and incorruptible literary organ. In 1836, on the abolition of the Navy Pay Office, Dilke, as a civil service pensioner, was able to devote himself more completely to 'The Athenæum'; and when, between 1840 and 1850, it had become an assured success, he relinquished the editorship. In 1846 he became manager of 'The Daily News'; but he withdrew from that post at the close of an agreed three years, the composite proprietorship proving intractable. The principles which he would have applied to it were adopted with good results later on. From 1847 or thereabout he did most of his best literary work—his exact, thorough, truth-finding, and truth-speaking papers on Junius, Burke, Wilkes, Dr. Wolcot ('Peter Pindar'), Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and many like subjects. Dilke was one of those who in 1858 attempted to bring about a reform in the administration of the Royal Literary Fund, and, being outvoted, founded the Guild of Literature and Art. He left London in 1862 and went to live at Alice Holt in Hampshire. There, on the 10th of August, 1864 his useful and distinguished life closed after an illness of only a few days. The facts of his life may be read more at length in the Biographical Sketch prefixed by his grandson, the Right Honourable Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, Baronet, M.P., to the two volumes of articles reprinted under the title of 'Papers of a Critic' (Murray, 1875), and his portrait, reproduced from a miniature, forms the frontispiece to the second volume of 'John Francis, Publisher of the Athenæum' (Bentley, 1888).

## CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN

Charles Armitage Brown was born in Lambeth in 1786. His father was a Scotch stockbroker. When only eighteen years old the lad was sent to St. Petersburg to manage a business. By 1810 or thereabout Charles had come back to London, penniless, and had to make a living as he might; but, through the early death of a brother, he became possessed of just enough to live on, and added to his income by writing for periodicals, &c. In 1814 a serio-comic opera by him, entitled 'Narensky, or the Road to Yaroslaf', was both published and performed at Drury Lane. The music was by Braham and Reeve: it ran for several nights, but is an indifferent production enough, though, according to his son, its success was sufficient to give him £300 and free admission for life to Drury Lane Theatre. His relations with Keats from 1817 to the time of the poet's death come out clearly and pleasantly in the letters, but there is a point recorded in the Houghton papers indicative of remarkable tact. After telling how anxious he was for Keats's friendship the moment he met him, Brown says—



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'I succeeded in making him come often to my house by never asking him to come oftener; and I let him feel himself at perfect liberty there chiefly by avoiding to assure him of the fact. He quickly became intimate.' In 1822 Brown went to Pisa taking with him his son by Abigail Donohue whom at one time he had thought of leaving in the care of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Richards. In Italy he met Byron, whom he tried to convert from his erroneous views on Keats, became more or less friendly with Landor, and contributed to 'The Liberal' under the pseudonyms of 'Carlucci' and 'Carlone'. He was the author of papers in that short-lived periodical which have been attributed to two wrong Charleses—to Lamb ('Les Charmettes and Rousseau') and to Cowden Clarke ('On Shakespeare's Fools'). He contributed to many of Leigh Hunt's ventures and wrote a number of articles for 'The New Monthly Magazine'. Returning to England in the spring of 1834, he lived at Laira Green near Plymouth, lectured on Shakespeare and Keats, and was associated with 'The Plymouth and Devonport Weekly Journal', in which appeared in 1840 his 'Walks in the North during the Summer of 1818'. This record, though unfinished, furnishes interesting confirmation of the tour with Keats described in the poet's letters. In 1838 he published a work of some permanent value and considerable talent, which he dedicated to Landor: it is called 'Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems. Being his Sonnets clearly developed: with his Character drawn chiefly from his works'. The publisher was James Bohn of London. It is a crown 8vo volume of over 300 pages. In the same year forty-eight stanzas of his translation of Francesco Berni's version of Boiardo's 'Orlando Innamorato' was printed in the November number of the 'West of England Magazine'. He meant to have edited Keats's Works with a memoir (which he wrote); but on deciding to emigrate to New Zealand he transferred his materials to Mr. Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton. In 1841 Brown obtained a grant of land at New Plymouth, now called Taranaki, and having sent his son on before him and disposed of his cottage at Laira Green, he left Plymouth on the 22nd of June 1841 and reached New Zealand in October. Dissatisfied with the land and in failing health he decided to return, but in June 1842 he died suddenly of apoplexy, and was buried on Marsland Hill. In his last letter to Severn written in January 1842 he said 'I have written much of my "New Zealand Handbook"; not "New Zealand Guide"; because I cannot conscientiously guide anyone to it': this book has not been published, and his unfinished novel 'Walter Hazelbourne' remains in manuscript in the Keats Museum at Hampstead.

Charles Brown was an excellent fellow and a good friend to Keats: he was a wit and a jolly companion, whom Keats loved. He was liable to prejudices of an unusually strong kind; and was wanting in breadth of character. The time will come when the battle between Charles Brown and George Keats will be fought over again around the growing cairn of Keats literature. For that reason I take this opportunity of putting on public record a note of the shrewd and critical-minded Dilke, who lived in the same block with him and knew him and the Keats circle intimately. It is written in Dilke's copy of the 'Life, Letters, &c.' (1848), as a *caveat* against any over-estimate of Brown's liberality and chivalry such as might possibly be formed after

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reading the work of Lord Houghton, who had described Brown as a 'retired Russia-merchant' and the 'generous protector and devoted friend of the Poet Keats'. This is Dilke's note:

'A retired Russia-merchant, the generous protector of the poet Keats! Fine words—what are they worth? I arrived from Broadstairs just in time to see the first notice of this work before it was inserted in the "Athenaeum", and therein these fine words and others of a like tendency were echoed with a vengeance—and the retired Russia-merchant figured as the generous patron! There is a curious amount of truth and error in these fine phrases—Brown *was* a retired Russia-merchant. His brother John had been clerk in a merchant house, started on his own account, went to Petersburg, sent for his brother Charles (then about 18 I should say), left him to conduct the business there and returned to manage it in England. They speculated in bristles and having little or no capital soon failed! Charles returned to England at about three-and-twenty—and for many years had a *very hard struggle*, the particulars of which do not concern Keats's history. Then his brother James returned from India and died within six weeks or two months. It was his small share of James's property on which he afterwards lived—for his reversion to two houses or one left him by his father had been sold at his bankruptcy. What Mr. Milnes means by a "generous protector" I know not—assuredly it had nothing to do with money. When John Keats died Brown sent in an account to George for board, money lent, and *interest* amounting to about £72—which by George's order I paid. Neither Mr. Milnes nor his distinguished . . . friend of Fiesole<sup>1</sup> knew anything about Brown—they were not sufficiently on an equality to penetrate the heart of his mystery. If it were to the purpose, I could here write down a character of Brown that would be greatly to his honour—though there would be nothing in it about the retired Russia-merchant or generous protector. I saw him under all varieties of fortune, they only under one, of moderate, very moderate, independence. He was the most scrupulously honest man I ever knew—but wanted nobleness to lift this honesty out of the commercial kennel. He would have forgiven John what he owed him with all his heart—but had John been able and offered to pay, he would have charged interest, as he did to George. He could do generous things too—but not after the fashion of the world and therefore they were not appreciated by the world. His sense of justice led him at times to do acts of generosity—at others of meanness—the latter was always noticed, the former overlooked—therefore amongst his early companions he had a character for anything rather than liberality—but he was liberal.' Believing every word of this note, I still find it compatible with a very high estimate of Brown's affection for Keats. In a touching letter sent to Severn when nursing the dying poet, his obviously genuine expressions of gratitude leave the impression that he would himself have done anything for Keats that might have lain in his power. There is a bust of Brown in the Keats House, Hampstead.

<sup>1</sup> Landor, who knew Brown better than Dilke suggests.

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### TAYLOR AND HESSEY

Of Keats's publishers, Taylor and Hessey, one takes in these letters, as indeed in history, a far more prominent position than the other. John Taylor was born at East Retford (Notts.) on the 31st of July 1781, and had been several years established in the publishing partnership at No. 93 Fleet Street when he became acquainted with Keats. He was a man of character and learning—the originator of the theory that Sir Philip Francis wrote the Letters of Junius, a subject on which he published 'A Discovery of the Author of the Letters of Junius' (1813), 'The Identity of Junius with a distinguished Living Character Established' (1816), and 'A Supplement to Junius Identified' (1817). These works, it will be noted, or at least two of them, preceded the time of his connexion with Keats as publisher of 'Endymion'; and it seems likely that Keats had been reading them when he wrote the postscript to Letter No 42—'I hope your next work will be of a more general Interest—I suppose you cogitate a little about it now and then.' About that very time a second edition, corrected and enlarged, of 'The Identity' was being issued; and it may be to that that Keats alludes in Letter 50 when he says to his brothers that he thinks Taylor 'will be out before' 'Endymion'.

It has been alleged that Edward Dubois was the author of these treatises; but Taylor himself emphatically declared that he had no assistance either from Dubois or from any one else. In 1821, on the acquisition of 'The London Magazine' by his firm, Taylor assumed the editorship, with Thomas Hood as sub-editor. Moving to Waterloo Place, the firm extended frequent and congenial hospitality to their distinguished contributors—such as Lamb, De Quincey, and Talfourd. Taylor, like his brother James, the Bakewell banker, was a close student of the currency question. Opposed to Sir Robert Peel's measures in this matter, he published a number of works on this somewhat dry department of human learning. His later writings include 'The Emphatic New Testament, with an Introductory Essay on Greek Emphasis' (1852), 'The Great Pyramid: Why was it Built?' (1859), 'The Battle of the Standards' (1864), and 'Light shed on Scripture Truth by a more Uniform Translation' (1864). Taylor died unmarried on the 5th of July 1864. He is buried at Gamston, near Retford. Augustus De Morgan, in 'A Budget of Paradoxes', 1872, writes of him as 'a man of a very thoughtful and quiet temperament', and of his books as 'valuable for their accurate learning'. In 'Sketches in the Life of John Clare' (1931) Mr. Edmund Blunden prints a study of Taylor in which, as he says, 'Clare plays the candid friend'; and some interesting particulars of her great-uncle and extracts from his letters to his family are given by Miss Olive M. Taylor in 'The London Mercury', June and July 1925. There is a medallion portrait of Taylor in the National Portrait Gallery.

Of James Augustus Hessey, I am able to record but little beyond what appears above or in the letters of Keats or the notes upon them. Lord Houghton applied to Reynolds for information about him, and got next to nothing beyond the fact of the partnership, and that Hessey 'attended to the retail business in Fleet Street' and was 'a very respectable person—but of no moment in the memoir' of Keats. The

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partnership with Taylor was dissolved on the 30th of June 1825—'the dissolution of partnership', says Miss Taylor in 'The London Mercury', 'was felt by both to be a grief, but a necessary grief'—and after a period spent in the retail trade and in auctioneering, he took over an old-established school at Hampstead in 1834. I ascertained from his son, Archdeacon Hessey, headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School, that he was born on the 28th of July 1785 and died on the 7th of April 1870. Of his personality one gathers nothing but pleasant impressions from the letters of Keats, slight as the indications are. The firm was collectively and individually on terms of friendship and kindness with the poet. The letters are generally to the predominant partner Taylor; of Hessey's personality the most significant thing in the letters is Keats's mention of him on one occasion as 'Mistessey'—a jocular way of alluding to someone's corruption of 'Mr. Hessey' into 'Mista 'Essey'. Had he been other than a good fellow Keats would not have ventured on 'Mistessey'.

## RICHARD WOODHOUSE

To Richard Woodhouse the lovers of Keats owe no common debt. Born at Bath on the 11th of December 1788, and educated at Eton, he was, when Keats became acquainted with him, 'a young barrister who', to use Sir Sidney Colvin's words ('Keats' in the 'English Men of Letters' series, p. 126), 'acted in some sort as adviser or literary assistant to Messrs. Taylor and Hessey'. It was actually in March 1811 that he had joined Taylor and Hessey's little circle of friends who met at 93 Fleet Street for practice in essay writing and debating, and mutual improvement generally. Taylor then described him as an 'excellent Classic', with a turn for poetry, abstemious to a remarkable degree (a few years later we catch him cracking a bottle of claret with Keats), of great industry, averse to the pleasures of the day, an early riser, and 'above all things . . . extremely attentive to religious duties'. The little that is known of Woodhouse shows that Taylor judged his man well. Woodhouse's interleaved and annotated copy of 'Endymion', and his commonplace-books full of copies made from Keats's poems before publication and copies of letters from Keats made with a view to biographical use, have proved invaluable, both for the quality and the quantity of what he preserved and for his own gifts as an accurate and judicious recorder. From a letter written by Keats to Dilke it appears that Charles Brown took 'one of his funny odd dislikes' to the literary young lawyer, but after Woodhouse had stayed with him near Florence for seven weeks in the autumn of 1832 Brown wrote to Severn that he liked him much and hoped he would return. Cowden Clarke, who did not meet him until after Keats's death, found him 'for a lawyer, rather a good fellow'. From the preface to 'A Grammar of the Spanish, Portuguese and Italian Languages', published by Woodhouse in 1815, we learn that he lived for more than two years in Spain and Portugal, and the dedication of the same book shows that he was a nephew of John Alderson, M.D., of Hull, from which Mr. Blunden traces his cousinship to Amelia Opie, née Alderson, the novelist and poet, and wife of John Opie the painter. His notes of conversations in which De Quincey took part were

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printed in Richard Garnett's edition of the 'Confessions of an English Opium-Eater' in the Parchment Library (1885). Mr. Blunden also records that he was solicitor to the Law Life Assurance Society and that in March 1824 he assisted the poet Clare in making his will. Woodhouse was not only a philologist and versifier and an excellent scholar in the literary sense, but he was also a practical stenographer. There are many notes in the interleaved 'Endymion' written in shorthand—Mavor's System (1795). The portrait of Keats by William Hilton now in the National Portrait Gallery, and the Girometti medallion, which may be seen in the Keats Museum at Hampstead, were both executed for Woodhouse. For some years before his death his health was precarious; in 1829 and 1830 he was in Madeira, and in 1832 in Italy as already mentioned. He died of consumption on the 3rd of September 1834, leaving his collection of Keats material to John Taylor.

## THOMAS RICHARDS

There is but little to record of Thomas Richards, the brother of the Charles Richards who printed Keats's first book of 'Poems' in 1817. He was the son of John Richards who, like Keats's father, carried on a livery-stable business, and with such success that when he made his will in 1814 he had, in addition to the business, substantial investments in the public funds and leasehold properties in Bayswater, Oxford Street, and Duke Street to leave to his wife and family of nine children. I have at present no knowledge of when Thomas Richards was born, and all that the Public Record Office can tell of him is that he was appointed a Junior Clerk of the First Class in the Store-keeper's Office of the Tower on the 1st of July 1804, was promoted in 1827, and died in 1831. From Charles Brown we learn that towards the end of 1820 Richards broke his leg romping with his children, and that he offered to take charge of Carlino Brown when the father went to Italy. Cowden Clarke in 'Recollections of Writers' describes him as 'a right good comrade, a capital reader, a capital listener, a capital appreciator of talent and of genius'; and in letters to Richards he refers to his godson, Thomas Richards the younger, as 'old gravity'. It must have been at Thomas Richards's house, No. 9 Providence Place, near Vauxhall Gardens, that Keats stayed in December 1816 on that night so 'whoreson' that he could not return home. In his letter to Georgiana (No. 172, p. 454) Keats contrasts him humorously with Rice and Reynolds; and the tone of the only letter we have from the poet to him convinces me that Thomas, not Charles, Richards was his intimate friend. Perhaps the strongest evidence of Keats's feelings towards Richards is the fact that he sent him the Wells-Amena letters to read, for in view of what he wrote to his brother George in the journal letter of February–May 1819 it is unlikely that he would have disclosed the details of that sorry affair to one who was not a tried and trusted friend. There are portraits of Thomas Richards's son, 'old gravity', his grandson Franklin Richards, and his great-grandson Grant, in Mr. Grant Richards's 'Author-Hunting' (Hamish Hamilton, 1934), but I regret that so far as I can learn there exists no portrait of the man Keats knew.

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### JAMES ELMES

James Elmes, senior even to his friend Haydon, was considerably older than Keats. Born in London on the 15th of October 1782, he had entered the Merchant Taylors' School in April 1796, but a few months after Keats's birth. Destined for the career of an architect, Elmes had studied under George Gibson and at the Royal Academy, had gained the silver medal for an architectural design as early as 1805, had been a constant exhibitor of designs for some years, had become Vice-President of the Royal Architectural Society in 1809; and when Haydon was firing Keats's young enthusiasm with fervour for the fine arts, Elmes, his close associate, was editing that notable periodical the 'Annals of the Fine Arts', 1816-20, in which the 'Nightingale' and 'Grecian Urn' odes first appeared and the Elgin Marbles sonnets were reprinted from 'The Examiner'. Elmes was a distinctly successful man: not only did he, as recorded in Redgrave's 'Dictionary of Artists of the English School' (1874), design and erect several buildings in the Metropolis, but he was Surveyor of the Port of London up till 1848, was a voluminous and instructive writer on art subjects, and shares with Haydon the credit of the Elgin Marbles propaganda. In 1844 he lost his sight, but regained it sufficiently after about five years to enable him to resume literary work. He died on the 2nd of April 1862, at Greenwich, and is buried at Charlton.

### HORACE SMITH

The instant and permanent success of one book and the well-merited friendship of several men great in the world of letters have combined to keep Horace Smith's memory green—greener indeed than the mass of his very voluminous writings apart from the 'Rejected Addresses' would have kept it. And so long as edition follows edition of that brilliant and delightful book, the world will not be at a loss for details of the life of the brother authors James Smith and Horatio, or, as he is always called, Horace Smith. They were the sons of Robert Smith, a Somersetshire man who came to London and became Solicitor to the Board of Ordnance. James was born on the 10th of February 1775, Horace not till the last day of 1779; and both were educated at Mr. Burford's School at Chigwell in Essex. Horace was trained in business in a merchant's office, went on the Stock Exchange, and had realized a competency by 1820 when he retired from business. He published a novel called 'The Runaway' in 1800, and from that time almost up to the time of his death he was engaged in literary pursuits. It was in 1812 that his brother and he found themselves famous by the publication of 'Rejected Addresses, or the New Theatrum Poetarum'; and that book was followed, in 1813, by their 'Horace in London'. Traces of Horace Smith's relations with Shelley occur in an anonymous work which he published in 1821—'Amarynthus, the Nympholept; a Pastoral Drama in three acts—with other Poems'; and Shelley recorded his opinion of Smith in the 'Letter to Maria Gisborne':

Wit and sense,

Virtue and human knowledge, all that might  
Make this dull world a business of delight,  
Are all combined in Horace Smith.

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Perhaps the most valued of Smith's single compositions outside the 'Rejected Addresses' is the admirable 'Address to a Mummy', in which true wit and true feeling are combined in a manner which Hood has lifted to the level of a high literary art. Smith seems to have met both Keats and Shelley for the first time on the same day in December 1816 at Hunt's cottage at Hampstead. Keats dined with Smith while his brothers were at Teignmouth, and from his one letter to him we learn that he found his 'Nehemiah Muggs' amusing. The tone of his letter (No. 32) to his brothers suggests that the company Smith kept did not attract him, and he did not pursue the intercourse. Smith died at Tunbridge Wells on the 12th of July 1849.

## THE JEFFREYS OF TEIGNMOUTH

It has been suggested that Mrs. Jeffrey and her daughters were family friends of the Keatses, and instrumental in bringing, first George and Thomas, and then John, to Teignmouth. This seems to me improbable from the terms in which Keats writes to his sister of having written to Miss Jeffrey. Letters 127 and 128 to Miss Jeffrey deal with the question of getting cheap lodgings near Teignmouth: in Letter 129 he tells his sister that he has 'written lately to some acquaintances in Devonshire'—not 'to our friends the Jeffreys'—concerning a cheap lodging. Hence I judge that, when George and Tom went to Teignmouth, Mrs. Jeffrey and her daughters let their warm Devonshire hearts go out to the invalid boy and his youthful nurse scarce more than a lad, and when the poet came were equally kind to the elder brother, beloved by everyone who met him.

From the four letters numbered 65, 67, and 128, I should judge that Mrs. Jeffrey had four daughters, Marian, Sarah, Fanny, and a young one who wore her hair down when the Keatses were at Teignmouth; but I have no distinct information about their names, apart from these letters, except about Sarah and Marian. I do not even know how many of them married, though it is on record that Sarah did not. She and Marian, who did marry, were still remembered at Teignmouth at the beginning of the present century by an old inhabitant or two; but I am not able to give dates of birth or death. Marian, concerning whom there is a local tradition that Keats 'was in love with her', was of a more or less romantic turn, ultimately married a Mr. Prowse, and lived at Torquay. Under her married name she published a book in 1830—'Poems by Mrs. I. S. Prowse'. It contains 183 pages, excluding the title, contents, &c., and including a seven-page list of subscribers in which appear the names of 'The Lady Noel Byron (4 copies)', Sir Egerton Bridges, Bart., and Keats's Teignmouth acquaintances, Captain Tonkin, Bickford Bartlett, Esq., and Miss Periman. Tradition will have it that the following lyric ('Si deseris perco', pp. 156 and 157 of the book) was addressed to Keats on his departure with his dying brother in 1818:

If thou canst bear to say adieu,  
To her who loves so warm, so true;  
If thou canst think thou mayst depart,  
Yet leave unbroken the young heart,

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Which gave to thee its earliest vow  
And lives but in thy presence now;  
Then quit thy love, thy bride—but know  
Si desiris, ah! pereó.

Yet, dearest, go; the pang will be  
Soon o'er; I shall not live to see  
Thy look of love, which is my heaven  
My happiness—to others given;  
'Tis best we part; I could not bear  
Thy coldness—nor the sick despair  
Of love decaying; go then, go,  
Si desiris, ah! pereó.

I had a foolish hope—'tis gone:  
I thought thou might'st have lov'd alone  
The simple heart which clung to thee  
With more than Woman's constancy:—  
'Tis over—but I murmur not  
Nor dare I wish a happier lot—  
To thee, to life farewell—for oh  
Si desiris, ah! pereó!—

Whether that song was for him or not, there is a clear reference to his untimely fate in a thoughtful poem standing first in the collection, and called 'Autumnal Musings'. After the sententious utterance—

Surely as the least wretched we must class,  
Those from th' unequal strife who earliest pass—

we have the following stanzas:

No more of such a theme—it is not well  
For one who scarce hath struck the mighty lyre,  
Unthinkingly the dreary cry to swell  
Of victims to Opinion's breath of fire;  
What, tho' it did destroy their high desire?  
Yet unappall'd be the Muse still my choice,  
E'en tho' the grave sends forth a warning voice.

Yea—from the grave a warning: *one* is there  
Who sought it as a refuge, when too late  
For health or peace, he found how falsely fair  
The hope that led him on to consecrate  
His heart unto the muse—and yet not *hate*,  
But scorn and laughter quenched his worthy pride,  
The minstrel's heart was stricken,—and he died.

Yet died he not in vain; if, ere they rush  
To wreak their thoughtless malice on their kind,  
His fate may bid men ponder ere they crush  
The first aspirings of the Poet's mind;  
Spare the weak blossom future fruit to find,  
And leave to Time the perfecter to bring  
A plenteous Autumn from a tardy Spring.



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It is natural to think that Keats and his brothers had much intellectual converse with a girl who could think and write like this a little later on, and it seems likely enough that one of the brothers showed her the 'Floure and Lefe' sonnet in 'The Examiner', from which she would go to the old poem itself. This would account for her use of the Chaucerian stanza, so little in vogue at the time. There are more stanzas in which Keats is glanced at, according to the Teignmouth legend:

More still the evening grew—the wither'd leaf  
Without once circling, fell unto the ground;<sup>1</sup>  
All living creatures sought in sleep relief  
From the unusual calmness brooding round;  
No longer did the wild bird's song resound;  
Darken'd the heavy night clouds o'er my head,  
'Twas a fit hour to commune with the dead.  
The unforgotten!—I can people here  
This solitude with beings of the past;  
They whose departing made the world look drear,  
And the bright sunshine of our youth o'ercast  
With sorrow, which thro' lengthen'd years shall last:  
Lo! potent as of old the magian's wand,  
Fancy, had call'd up the pale shadowy band.

After this, in one and the same page, we get a reminiscence of Keats's 'Lamia' (Book II, lines 229-38);

Ye who tell  
With your philosophy, the rule and cause  
That shapes the rainbow—

and the passionate lines

Oh could I hear e'en tho' my heart were riven  
Those well remembered accents *once* again—  
It may not be—the wish, the thought are vain,  
A mourner I, amid life's desert thrown  
To feel and suffer—live and die—alone!

In 'Autumnal Musings', which was composed on Little Haldon, overlooking Teignmouth from a point close to what antiquarians tell us are the traces of an ancient Danish encampment, there are more striking passages than any of these I have quoted; but they are less germane to the present subject, and do not add to our biographical knowledge of the writer. From Tom Hood we learn that Mrs. Prowse contributed to the annuals, that her son, William Jeffrey Prowse, was born at Torquay on the 6th of May 1836, and that her husband died about 1844. Young Prowse became a writer of excellent *vers de société*, was trained as a journalist by Thornton Leigh Hunt, joined the staff of 'The Daily Telegraph' in 1861, and died of consumption at Nice on Easter Sunday 1870.

## FANNY BRAWNE AND HER MOTHER

Although Mrs. Brawne is numbered among Keats's correspondents, there is but one letter to her; and there is little to record save that she was the widow of a Mr. Samuel Brawne, and came to Hampstead at

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Hyperion', i. 10:

But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.

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the time when Dilke and Brown lived at Wentworth Place, bringing her three children, Fanny, Samuel, and Margaret; that, having taken Keats in when she was renting and residing in one of the Wentworth Place houses, and when he left Hunt's home suddenly on account of the opening of a letter by one of Hunt's servants, the good lady did her part in nursing him. Her end was tragic: she was burnt to death, by her dress having caught fire as she stood at the door of her house in Wentworth Place. She was buried at St. Martin-in-the-Fields on the 1st of December 1829.

Fanny or Frances Brawne was born on the 9th of August 1800, and was therefore at the time of Thomas Keats's death, when she came prominently into Keats's life, over 18 years of age. The story of her relations with Keats appears very clearly and fully in the letters which will be found in the second half of this book. I am not among those who think otherwise than kindly and respectfully of her. I fully believe that she was warmly attached to Keats and mourned his loss long and bitterly. Time, the healer of most wounds, healed that of Fanny Brawne sufficiently to admit of her marriage when Keats had been twelve years dead. On the 15th of June 1833 at the Parish Church of St. Marylebone she became the wife of Mr. Louis Lindo, afterwards changed to Lindon, who was known to the public as one of the Secretaries of the 1851 Exhibition.<sup>1</sup> She herself was a woman of considerable character and attainment, though not known to the public. She was a contributor to Blackwood's Magazine;<sup>1</sup> and I have in my possession a manuscript tale called 'Nickel List', translated by her from the German, showing some literary skill. Her son, my friend Herbert Brawne-Lindon, and her daughter, Miss Margaret Lindon, held her memory in the highest respect and affection. She died on the 4th of December 1865. Her husband died on the 21st of October 1872, aged sixty; they lie in the same grave in Brompton Cemetery.

In September 1821 Valentin Llanos appears to have called on Miss Brawne on his way to stay with a Mr. Wigram at Walthamstow, an incident possibly leading to the social events mentioned below. This Mr. Wigram was, no doubt, one of the twenty-three children of Sir Robert Wigram, Bart. (1744-1830), who owned Walthamstow House, one of the most considerable of the Walthamstow mansions of the eighteenth century.

An entirely disinterested opinion of Fanny Brawne was brought to light in 1931 by Mr. Blunden,<sup>2</sup> and in view of the little that is known of her from contemporary sources it is desirable to give it here. The passages concerning her occur in the 'Life of Gerald Griffin Esq.' by his brother Dr. Daniel Griffin (London: 1843). Griffin (1803-40), poet, novelist, and playwright, had come to London in 1823 and made the acquaintance of Valentin Llanos. On the 21st of June 1825 he wrote to his sister Lucy:—'I think it probable that I may some of

<sup>1</sup> The statements concerning Lindon's connexion with the Exhibition and his wife's association with 'Blackwood's Magazine' fail of verification today. I feel sure that their son imparted the information to my father in the course of conversation; the 'Blackwood' articles are mentioned by him in a letter of 1877 with an offer of assistance in tracing them.

<sup>2</sup> In 'Keats's Letters, 1931; Marginalia', *Studies in English Literature*, vol. xi, no. 4, October 1931 (Tokyo).

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these days become acquainted with the young sister of poor Keats the poet, as she is coming to spend some time with a friend of mine. If I do I will send you an account of her. My Spanish friend, Valentin Llanos, was intimate with him and spoke with him three days before he died. I am greatly interested about that family. Keats you must know was in love, and the lady whom he was to have married had he survived Gifford's (the butcher) review, attended him to the last. She is a beautiful young creature, but now wasted away to a skeleton, and will follow him shortly I believe. She and his sister say they have oft found him on suddenly entering the room, with that review in his hand, reading as if he would devour it—completely absorbed—absent and drinking it in like mortal poison. The instant he observed anybody near him however, he would throw it by, and begin to talk of some indifferent matter. The book displays great genius but unfortunately it afforded one or two passages capable of being twisted to the purpose of a malignant wretch of a reviewer such as Gifford is, with much effect.' A year later he wrote to his sister Ellen:—'I spent a very pleasant evening the other day, with the sister of John Keats—his intended bride, (as beautiful, elegant and accomplished a girl as any—or more so than any I have seen here) and the husband of the former, who is an old friend of mine.' On July the 31st 1826, he expresses regret, 'as deeply as it is possible for me to say' that Llanos is going to France; but the friendship was maintained, and on January the 27th 1829, he wrote to Lucy Griffin:—'Dining the other day at my friend Llanos's, I met that Miss B—— of whom I spoke to you some time since—sadly changed and worn, I thought, but still most animated—lively and even witty in conversation. She quite dazzled me in spite of her pale looks. Her sister was there, younger and prettier, but not so clever. If I were certain that the whole article were equal to the specimen given, how I should wish that my dear Lucy had such a friend and companion in her solitude! and how I should pity poor Keats!'

Eleven months later Miss Brawne received a letter of a singularly harassing nature. It was addressed in Charles Brown's clerkly handwriting to 'Miss Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead | near London', with 'Inghilterra' at the top and 'Angleterre' across the lower left-hand corner. It bore a 'Firenze' postmark without a date, and a London postmark, 'F.P.O. DE 29 1829'. This is what it contained:—

Florence. 17 December 1829.

My dear Miss Brawne,

Without any apology for our long silence, let me hope you are in the best health, that your mother is better, and that Margaret is never ailing; to which I add a merry Xmas and a happy new year to all. Now, with these good wishes, I may begin.

A few days ago, I received a letter from the Galignani in Paris telling me they are on the eve of publishing the works of Keats, and asking for his autograph. I sent it to them, with a letter stating it was always my intention to write his life, and annex it to a Tragedy of his, together with some unpublished poems in my possession, whenever his countrymen should have learnt to value his poetry. I also told them I believed that time was arrived, as needs it must, sooner or later; but that I was

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fearful it was too late for me to enter into any arrangement with them. Whatever their answer may be, I am resolved to write his life, persuaded that no one, except yourself, knew him better. Leigh Hunt's account of him is worse than disappointing; I cannot bear it; it seems as if Hunt was so impressed by his illness, that he had utterly forgotten him in health. This is a dreadful mistake, because it is our duty to his memory to show the ruin his enemies had effected; and I will not spare them. It is not my present purpose to enter into any criticism on his works, but to let it be simply a biography; and, to make that as vivid as possible, I shall incorporate into it passages from letters to me, and to his brothers,—which last are in my possession; together with passages from particular poems, or entire ones, relating to himself, always avoiding those which regard you, unless you let me know that I may, without mentioning your name, introduce them. There are, however, two of his letters which I wish to give entire; one written when he despaired of Tom's recovery, the other when he despaired of his own. This latter one is of the most painful description; therefore I wish it to be known, that Gifford and Lockhart may be thoroughly hated and despised. The question is whether you will object to it; I think you will not. Though much of it regards you, your name is never once mentioned. Then again, those poems addressed to you, which you permitted me to copy,—may I publish them? It is impossible for me to judge of your feelings on the subject; but whatever they are, you are certain that I shall obey them. To my mind, you ought to consent, as no greater honour can be paid to a woman than to be beloved by such a man as Keats. I am aware that, at a more recent period, you would have been startled at its being alluded to; but consider that eight years have now passed away; and now, no one, if you do not, can object to it. Besides, Hunt has alluded to you, and what more will it be to give his poems addressed to that lady? Your name will still remain as secret to the world as before. I shall of course scrupulously avoid intimating who you are, or in what part of England you reside. As his love for you formed so great a part of him, we may be doing him an injustice in being silent on it: Indeed something must be said especially as Hunt has said something. We live among strange customs; for had you been husband and wife, though but for an hour, every one would have thought himself at liberty publicly to speak of, and all about you; but as you were only so in your hearts, it seems, as it were, improper. Think of it in your best train for thinking, my dear Miss Brawne, and let me know your decision. I have turned it in my mind a great deal, and find nothing,—to confess the truth freely,—against it.

Three months ago I heard you were at Bruges, on a visit to your aunt; but I suppose you are, by this time, returned. Give my kindest remembrances to Mrs. Brawne and Margaret. Carlino and I lead very comfortable, happy, healthy lives, with short lessons, long walks, and, now and then, a game at romps, or a 'ballo grande' at the Opera. Believe me always

Your's most sincerely,  
Cha<sup>s</sup>. Brown.

Brown did not know that he was intruding with a subject disturbing enough at any time but more so to a woman whose nerves had been

## BIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA CONCERNING

so recently shattered by her mother's dreadful death. Yet Miss Brawne's courage did not desert her. The same day she sat down to answer him. Her draft reply, for such I take to be the unfinished document now exhibited with Brown's letter in the Keats Museum, suggests to me an anguished heart and a mind distraught by the idea of her love for Keats being noised abroad. I give the draft, as I have given the poet's letters, as closely in accord with the holograph as print can make it.

Hampstead Decr 29<sup>th</sup> 1829—

My dear Mr Brown

As the aggressor I am too happy to escape the apologies I owe you on my long silence not gladly to take your hint and say nothing about it, the best reparation I can make is to answer your letter of today as soon as possible although I received it only this morning in the hours that have intervened before I sit down to answer it my feelings have entirely changed on the subject of the request it contains. Perhaps you will think I was opposed to it and am now come over to your side the question, but it just just the contrary had I answered your letter immediately

~~as soon as I received it~~ I should have told you that I considered myself so entirely unconnected with Mr Keats except by my own feelings that nothing published respecting him could affect me, but I now see it differently. We have all our little world in which we figure and I expressing disinclination at the idea

cannot help ~~feeling some reluctance~~ that the few acquaintance I have obtain such sensations

should be able to ~~have~~ a key to my feelings. Having said so much you will probably conclude that I mean to refuse your request. Perhaps when I assure you that though my opinion has changed my intention of complying ~~with all~~ in every respect with your wishes remains, you will think I am mentioning my objections to make a favor of my consent but indeed my dear Mr Brown if you do, you mistake me

justify s  
entirely. It is only to ~~vindicate~~ myself I own that I state all I think. ~~I ought~~ to you I ~~feel~~ am very grateful nor ought I to have gone so far without thanking you for your kindness and consideration in writing to me on the subject—~~How absurd have I now experienced that is is sometimes impossible~~ I assure you I should not have hinted that your wishes were painful to me did I not feel that the

was  
suffering myself to be even alluded to ~~want~~ a want of pride. So far am I from possessing overstrained delicacy that the circumstance of mere

its being a love story is the least of my concern, on the contrary had I been his wife I should have felt my present reluctance would have been so much stronger that I think I must have made it my that would

request ~~to you to~~ relinquish your intention. The only thing that saves me now is that so very few can know I am in any way implicated and that of those few ~~there is a good chance~~ I may hope the greater number may never see the book in Question. Do then entirely as you please and be assured that I comply with your wishes rather because they are

## KEATS'S CORRESPONDENTS

yours than with the expectation of any good that can be done. I fear the kindest act would be to let him rest for ever in the obscurity to

unhappy have  
which unfortunate circumstances condemned him. Will the writings  
that remain of his rescue him from it? You can tell better than  
I can, and are more unbiased impartial on the subject for my wish  
has long been that his name, his very name could be forgotten by  
every one but myself, that I have often wished most intensely. Never-I  
like

~~I was more generous ten years ago, I should not now endure the odium of being connected with one who was working up his way against poverty and every sort of abuse. To your publishing his poems addressed~~

*to me I do not see there can be any objection after the subject has been once*

alluded to, if you think them worthy of him. I entirely agree with you that if his life is to be published no part ought to be kept back ~~that can~~ will for all you can show is his character, his life was too short and too unfortunate for any thing else. I have no doubt that his talents would have been great, not the less for their being developed late rather late

which I believe they <sup>was the case</sup> were, all I fear is whether he has left enough to ~~show that to~~ make people believe that. If I could think so I should consider to make that

think it right to sacrifice to his reputation that I now do to your kind  
even

motives. Not that the establishment of his fame would give me the pleasure it ought to do. Without claiming too much constancy for myself I may say truly that he is well-remembered by me and that satisfied with that I could wish no one but myself knew he had ever existed but I confess that as he was so much calumniated and suffered so much from it, it is perhaps the duty of those who loved and valued

him ~~also~~ to vindicate him also, and if ~~that~~ <sup>it</sup> can be done, all the friends that time has left him and I above all must ~~feel~~ be deeply indebted to you. I am glad you feel that Mr Hunt in gives him a weakness of

surely character that only belonged to his ill health. Mr Hazlitt, if I remember rightly some remarks used five or six years ago is still more positive in fixing it on him. As I lost him I should be glad if you could disprove I was a very poor judge of character ten years ago and ~~mi~~ probably overrated every good quality he had but surely they go too far on the other side. after all he was but four and twenty when his illness begun ~~and he had~~ and he had gone through a great deal of vexation before. . .

There the draft, filling two quarto pages, ends. I do not know whether the fair copy is extant. At all events Miss Brawne tried her hand at the address on a section of the doublings of Brown's letter, beginning 'Al Signor' and leaving that to write 'Il Signor Charles Brown | Gentiluomo Inglese | Firenze | Italia'.

Although Fanny Brawne had invited Fanny Keats to stay with her

## BIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA CONCERNING

when George was in England, the two did not meet until after John's death, when they became close friends. Miss Brawne complied promptly with the request mentioned in John's farewell letter to his sister (No. 236), and the correspondence then begun lasted for many years, while in her letters to my father written between the years 1877 and 1889 Mrs. Llanos was still displaying interest in the Brawne family and sending messages to them.

Samuel Brawne was born at Ealing on the 26th of July 1804 and died at Wentworth Place in April 1828. Margaret Brawne, who was born on the 19th of April 1809, married Chevalier João Antonio Pereira da Cunha at the English Episcopal Church at Dieppe on the 30th of November 1833; I have been unable to trace the date and place of her death.

Since the above brief account of Fanny Brawne was first printed her letters to Fanny Keats have returned to Hampstead and are now in the Keats Museum. Should any sceptics still exist, they have only to read those letters, edited by the late Fred Edgumbe and published by the Oxford University Press in London in 1936 and in New York in 1937, to be convinced of the absolute sincerity of Fanny Brawne's love for Keats.

## THOMAS MONKHOUSE

Thomas Monkhouse, who now appears for the first time among Keats's correspondents, came from a Penrith family and was born in 1783. In June 1820 he married Jane Horrocks, a daughter of the sometime Member of Parliament for Preston, and died of consumption at Clifton on 26 February 1825. He was a well-to-do London merchant carrying on business in Budge Row, and a kinsman by marriage of Wordsworth, who, with his wife and daughter, accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Monkhouse on their Continental wedding tour. Many references to Monkhouse may be found in the diary of Crabb Robinson, whom he numbered among his literary and artistic friends. Monkhouse was present at Haydon's 'immortal dinner', see Letter 34, and unpublished correspondence discloses that he was one of the unwary who lent the painter money. On hearing of his death Charles Lamb wrote to Sarah Hutchinson: 'No one will more feel it than Robinson, to whom I have written. No one more than he and we acknowledge the nobleness and worth of what we have lost. Words are perfectly idle'; and a little later to the same correspondent: 'It is a damp, I do assure you, amid all my prospects that I can receive *none* from a quarter upon which I had calculated, almost more than from any, upon receiving congratulations. I had grown to like poor M. more and more. I do not esteem a soul living or not living more warmly than I had grown to esteem and value him. But words are vain.' Who would not be proud to know that Lamb had written of him in such terms?

## WILLIAM MAYOR

I have gathered but few details of the life of William Mayor, to whom Letter 112 is addressed; I can find no record of him at Somerset House, and the Islington Parish Church registers and Lewis's 'History

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of Islington' while affording information about others of the same surname, and probably of the same stock, make no mention of this one. When Keats wrote to him in February 1819 he was apparently living with his family at Sebbons Buildings and the Islington rate-books for 1830 show a William Mayor living at No. 7 Sebbons Buildings and paying a rent of £54 a year, quite a considerable rental in those days. On 15 February 1821 Mayor became a pupil of B. R. Haydon (see Preface, p. xi), and Joseph Hogarth, the well-known print and picture dealer of Mount Street, writing of him after his death, says<sup>1</sup> that in Haydon's studio he formed a friendship with his fellow-pupils, the Landseers, W. Bewick, and George Lance, and that 'his instruction under Haydon led him to see and appreciate the importance which drawings by the old masters were to one seeking information; and desiring to mature his judgment, he journeyed to the Continent'. From a letter addressed to him by Haydon<sup>2</sup> it appears that he was at Amsterdam with Edward Chatfield in August 1822 studying Rubens's pictures. After his return he was introduced to Sir Thomas Lawrence who, according to Hogarth, commended his discrimination and desired to possess some of the sketches he had bought, thereby influencing his whole future, 'for from that period, for half a century all but two years, he devoted his entire attention to this one pursuit'. In 1831 he began the publication of a 'Series of Fac-similes of original designs by the most eminent painters of the Italian, German, Spanish, Flemish, Dutch, French and English Schools' which he dedicated to the memory of Sir Thomas Lawrence. In 1871, when he was living at No. 6 Bayswater Hill, he published a catalogue of his collection which was reprinted after his death by his son, Edgar J. Mayor, in 1874 and again in 1875 when his pictures were sold, many of them passing into Sir Edward Poynter's collection. An amusing description of Mayor's personal appearance is given by Edmond de Goncourt in his 'Maison d'un Artiste' (Paris, 1881).

<sup>1</sup> 'A Brief Chronological Description of a Collection of Original Drawings and Sketches by the Old Masters . . . formed by the late Mr. William Mayor' (London, 1875).

<sup>2</sup> 'Notes and Queries', 11S. 1, 11 June 1910, p. 461.



# KEATS'S PEN-SLIPS AND UNUSUAL SPELLINGS IN THE LETTERS

*Words marked with an asterisk accord with the spelling given in Bailey's English Dictionary which Keats used*

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## LETTERS



## LETTERS

1. *To GEORGE KEATS. Aug. (1816).*

*No address or postmark.*

Margate Aug<sup>t</sup>

My dear George,

If there be any room in this Sheet after I shall have written the prosing . . . I will say a few things to you in downright Prose.

FULL many a dreary hour have I past,  
My Brain bewildered, and my Mind o'er cast  
With Heaviness; in seasons, when I've thought  
No spherey strains,<sup>1</sup> by me, could e'er be caught  
From the blue Dome, though I to dimness Gaze  
On the far depth, where sheeted Lightning plays;  
Or, on the wavy Grass, outstretch'd supinely,  
Pry 'mong the Stars, to strive to think divinely:  
That I should never hear Apollo's song,  
Though feathery clouds were floating all along  
The purple West, and two bright Streaks between,  
The golden Lyre itself were faintly seen:  
That the still Murmur of the honey Bee,  
Would never teach a rural song to me:  
That the bright glance, from Beauty's Eyelids slanting,  
Would never make a lay of mine enchanting,  
Or warm my Breast with ardor, to unfold  
Some Tale of Love, and Arms, in times of old.

But, there are times, when those who love the Bay,  
Glide from all sorrowing, far, far away:  
A sudden glow comes on them; nought they see  
In Water, Earth, or Air, but Poesy.  
It has been said, dear George, and true I hold it,  
(For Knightly Spenser to Libertas<sup>2</sup> told it,)

1. A corner of the holograph of this letter has been torn off and with it the precise date and possibly one or two words after 'prosing'. George Keats made a transcript of the poem in his scrap-book and dated it at the end 'Margate—August 1816'. The transcript follows the original very closely, but slight variations are found in the printed version in Keats's first book, 'Poems', 1817, where it appears as the second of three 'Epistles', the first being addressed to George Felton Mathew and the third to Charles Cowden Clarke.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Comus', l. 1021.

<sup>2</sup> Libertas means Leigh Hunt who is so referred to in the 'Specimen of an Induction to a Poem' and also in the epistle 'To Charles Cowden Clarke'.



That, when a Poet is in such a trance,  
In Air, he sees white Coursers, paw, and prance;  
Bestriden of gay Knights, in gay Apparel,  
Who, at each other tilt, in playful Quarrel;  
And, what we, ignorantly, sheet lightning, call,  
Is the swift opening of their wide Portal;  
When the bright Warder blows his Trumpet clear,  
Whose Tones reach nought on earth, but Poet's Ear.  
When these enchanted Portals open wide,  
And through the light, the horsemen swiftly glide;  
The Poet's eye can reach those golden Halls,  
And view the glory of their festivals:  
Their Ladies bright, that in the distance seem  
Fit for the silv'ring of a Seraphs dream:  
Their rich brim(m)ed Goblets, that incessant run  
Like the bright spots that move about the Sun:  
And, when upheld, the Wine, from each bright Jar  
Pours with the lustre of a falling star.  
Yet further off, are dimly seen, their bowers,  
Of which, no mortal Eye can reach the Flowers;  
And 'tis right just—for well Apollo knows  
'Twould make the Poet quarrel with the Rose.  
All that's reveal'd from that far seat of Blissess,  
Is, the clear fountains, interchanging kisses  
As gracefully descending, light, and thin,  
Like silver streaks across a Dolphin's fin,  
When he upspringeth from the coral Caves,  
And sports, with half his Tail above the Waves.

These Wonders strange, he sees, and many more,  
Whose head is pregnant with poetic lore.  
Should he upon an Evening ramble fare,  
With Forehead, to the soothing breezes, bare;  
Would he nought see, but the dark silent blue,  
With all its Diamonds trembling through, and through?  
Or the coy Moon, when in the waviness  
Of whitest Clouds, she doth her beauty dress,  
And staidly paces, higher up, and higher,  
Like a sweet Nun in Holyday Attire?  
Ah Yes! much more would start into his sight;  
The Revelries, and Mysteries of Night:  
And should I ever view them, I will tell ye  
Such Tales, as needs must with Amazement spell ye.

These are the living pleasures of the Bard;

But richer, far, Posterity's award.  
What does he murmur with his latest breath,  
While his proud Eye looks through the film of death?  
"What, though I leave this dull, and earthly mould,  
"Yet, shall my spirit, lofty converse hold  
"With after times—the Patriot shall feel  
"My stern alarum, and unsheath his steel:  
"Or in the senate, thunder out my Numbers,  
"To startle Princes from their easy slumbers.  
"The Sage will mingle with each moral Theme  
"My happy thoughts, sententious: he will teem  
"With lofty Periods, when my Verses fire him,  
"And then I'll stoop from Heaven, to inspire him.  
"Lays have I left, of such a dear delight,  
"That Maids will sing them on their bridal Night.  
"Gay Villagers, upon a Morn of May,  
"When they have tired their gentle Limbs with play,  
"And formed a snowy circle on the Grass;  
"Placing in midst thereof, that happy Lass  
"Who chosen is their Queen; with her fine head  
"Crowned with flowers, purple, white, and red:  
"For there the lily, and the Musk rose, sighing,  
"Are emblems true of hapless Lovers dying.  
"Between her Breasts, that never yet felt trouble,  
"A bunch of Violets, full blown, and double,  
"Serenely sleep. She from a Casket takes  
"A Little Book, and then a Joy awakes  
"About each youthful heart; with stifled Cries,  
"And rubbing of white hands, and sparkling Eyes.  
"For she's to read a Tale of Hopes, and fears;  
"One that I fostered in my youthful Years.  
"The Pearls, that on each glist'ning circlet sleep,  
"Gush ever and anon with silent crep,  
"Lured by the innocent Dimples. To sweet rest,  
"Shall the dear Babe, upon its Mother's breast  
"Be lull'd with songs of Mine. Fair world Adieu!  
"Thy Dales, and Hills are fading from my view:  
"Swiftly, I mount, upon widespreading Pinions,  
"Far from the narrow bounds of thy Dominions.  
"Full joy I feel, while thus I cleave the Air,  
"That my soft Verse will charm thy Daughters fair,  
"And warm thy Sons." Ah, my dear friend, and Brother!  
Could I, at once, my mad Ambition smother

For tasting Joys like these; sure I should be  
Happier, and dearer to Society.  
At times 'tis true I've felt relief from pain,  
When some bright thought has darted through my brain:  
Through all that Day I've felt a greater Pleasure,  
Than if I'd brought to light a hidden Treasure.  
As to my Sonnets; though none else should heed them,  
I feel delighted, still, that you will read them.  
Of late, too, I have had much calm enjoyment;  
Stretched on the Grass, at my best lov'd employment  
Of scribbling Lines for you. These things I thought,  
While, in my face, the freshest Breeze I caught.  
E'en now, I'm pillow'd on a bed of Flowers,  
That crown a lofty Cliff, which proudly towers  
Above the Ocean Waves. The Stalks, and Blades  
Checquer my Tablet with their quivering shades.<sup>1</sup>  
On one side, is a field of drooping Oats;  
Through which the Poppies show their scarlet Coats;  
So pert, and useless, that they bring to Mind  
The scarlet Coats, that pester human kind.  
And on the other side, outspread, is seen  
Ocean's blue mantle, streak'd with purple & green.  
Now 'tis I see a Canvassed Ship, and now  
Mark the bright silver curling round her prow.  
I see the Lark down dropping to her Nest,  
And the broad winged Sea Gull, never at rest;  
For when no more he spreads his feathers free,  
His breast is dancing on the reastless Sea.  
Now I direct my Eyes towards the west,  
Which at this Moment, is in Sunbeams drest;  
Why westward turn? 'Twas but to say adieu!  
'Twas but to kiss my hand dear George to you!

As this may be kept for a fair Coppy I will write the  
three words I have time to do on the sheet<sup>2</sup> which will  
inclose this.

From GEORGE KEATS to JOHN and THOMAS KEATS.  
(Aug. 1816.)

No address or postmark.

My Dear Brothers

I take the advantage of enclosing my thanks for two letters, one  
from each of you received this Morning in a Frank of Our Friend

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Milton, 'L'Allegro', l. 96, 'Checquer'd shade'.

<sup>2</sup> This sheet is not with the letter.

Wells<sup>1</sup>—To your's My Dear Tom I will answer on Monday or Tuesday John's shall be attended to at the beginning of next Week. I most fortunately met Briggs<sup>2</sup> this morning, who informed (me) C.C.C. was living with Mr Towers.<sup>3</sup> I shall endeavour to see him—. What may occur at our meeting shall be communicat'd in my next. Wagtail is waiting & I am not over-quick or you should have more from

Your Affectionate

(George)

2. To CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE. *Wednesday 9 Oct.*  
(1816).

*No address or postmark.*

Wednesday Oct<sup>r</sup> 9<sup>th</sup>—

My dear Sir,

The busy time has just gone by, and I can now devote any time you may mention to the pleasure of seeing Mr Hunt—'t will be an Era in my existance—I am anxious too to see the Author of the Sonnet to the Sun, for it is no mean gratification to become acquainted with Men who in their admiration of Poetry do not jumble together Shakspeare and Darwin<sup>4</sup>—I have coppied out a sheet or two of Verses which I composed some time ago, and find

worst

so much to blame in them that the best part will go into

<sup>1</sup> Charles Jeremiah Wells, see under Thomas Keats in Biographical Memoranda.

<sup>2</sup> Briggs, Charles, a school fellow; George met him again in America.

<sup>3</sup> Towers, John, chemist; married Clarke's sister Isabella Jane.

2. My attention was drawn to this letter by Mr. John H. Birss through the late Louis A. Holman who printed it in his periodical 'Within the Compass of a Print Shop', October 1932. The holograph is in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and I learn that it was first printed in 'A Catalogue of the Collection of Autographs Formed by Ferdinand Julius Dreer', 1890. The year date of the letter has been discussed in many quarters since its re-publication in 'Notes and Queries', vol. 163, no. 19, p. 326 (Nov. 5, 1932), but it was not until I had read the concise summing up by the former Professor of Poetry at Oxford in his fine edition of Keats's Poetical Works (Clarendon Press, 1939, p. lxxii) that I finally decided to accept 1816: 'When I say that "all the indications point to 1816", I do not think that I overstate the matter. If we retain the old dating, 1815, we have to suppose a singular conjunction of at least four errors. We have to suppose, first, that, when Keats wrote "Wednesday Oct<sup>r</sup> 9<sup>th</sup>", he meant to write either "Monday Oct<sup>r</sup> 9<sup>th</sup>" or "Wednesday Oct<sup>r</sup> 11<sup>th</sup>". We have to suppose, secondly, that he dated wrongly the epistle to Mathew; and, thirdly, that he dated wrongly the Chapman's Homer sonnet. And fourthly, we have to suppose that Hunt was mistaken as to the date at which he met Keats. To suppose all this is to suppose, not merely that it is human to err, but that error is invariable.'

<sup>4</sup> Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), physician and poet.

the fire—those to G. Mathew<sup>1</sup> I will suffer to meet the eye of Mr H. notwithstanding that the Muse is so frequently mentioned. I here sinned in the face of Heaven even while rememb(e)ring what, I think, Horace says, “never presume to make a God appear but for an Action worthy of a God.”<sup>2</sup> From a few Words of yours when last I saw you, I have no doubt but that you have something in your Portfolio which I should by rights see—I will put you in Mind of it. Although the Borough is a beastly place in dirt, turnings and windings; yet No 8 Dean Street<sup>3</sup> is not difficult to find; and if you would run the Gauntlet over London Bridge, take the first turning to the left and then the first to the right and moreover knock at my door which is nearly opposite a Meeting, you would do one a Charity which as St Paul saith is the father of all the Virtues<sup>4</sup>—At all events let me hear from you soon—I say at all events not excepting the Gout in your fingers—

Your's Sincerely  
John Keats—

3. To CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE. *Thursday 31 Oct. 1816.*

*Address:* Mr C. C. Clarke. | Mr Towers, | Warner Street, | Clerkenwell.

*Postmark:* 31 OC 1816.

My daintie Davie,

I will be as punctual as the Bee to the Clover—Very glad am I at the thoughts of seeing so soon this glorious

<sup>1</sup> George Felton Mathew (1795–1854), poetaster; addressed some lines to Keats in ‘The European Magazine’, October 1816, and reviewed ‘Poems’, 1817, in the same journal, May 1817.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Ars Poetica’, 191. Keats, who omitted the final quotes, had probably read the Earl of Roscommon’s version:

‘Never presume to make a God appear,  
But for a Bus’ness worthy of a God.’

<sup>3</sup> Sir William Hale-White in his article on ‘Keats as a Medical Student’ in ‘Guy’s Hospital Reports’ for July 1925 says that ‘coming over London Bridge . . . if you turned to the left, the first turning was Tooley Street, south of which, where London Bridge railway stations now stand, was a collection of small streets forming the district known as Berghené or Petty Burgundy. One of these running south was Dean Street, the southern end of it was a little east of Guy’s’. Number 8 was the eighth house on the left-hand side going from Tooley Street and it was ‘nearly opposite’ a Baptist Chapel. All that is left of Dean Street is now called Stainer Street; the change of name was ordered on 16 June 1906.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians xiii. 13.

3. This note seems to have been written just after Keats’s introduction to Haydon—which apparently took place at Leigh Hunt’s, for in Haydon’s

Haydon and all his Creation. I pray thee let me know when you go to Ollier's<sup>1</sup> and where he resides—this I forgot to ask you—and tell me also when you will help me waste a sullen day<sup>2</sup>—God 'ield you—<sup>3</sup>

J K

4. To CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE. (*Nov. 1816.*)  
*No address or postmark.*

To C. C. C. greeting

Whereas I have received a Note from that worthy Gentleman Mr Haydon, to the purport of his not being able to see us on this days Evening for that he hath an order for the Orchestra to see Timon y<sup>e</sup> Misanthropas, and begging us to excuse the same—it behooveth me to make this thing known to you for a manifest Reason.

So I rest your Hermit—John Keats.

5. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Wednesday 20 Nov. (1816).*

*No address or postmark.*

Nov 20<sup>th</sup>

My dear Sir—

Last Evening wrought me up, and I cannot forbear sending you the following—

Yours unfeignedly

John Keats.—

'Autobiography' (1853, vol. i, p. 331) we read: 'About this time I met John Keats, at Leigh Hunt's, and was amazingly interested by his prematurity of intellectual and poetical power. . . . After a short time I liked him so much that a general invitation on my part followed, and we became extremely intimate. He visited my painting-room at all times, and at all times was welcome.' The first words suggest that Keats had in mind Burns's 'There I'll spend the day wi' you, My ain dear dainty Davie', in the song 'Now rosy May', or his 'Second Epistle to Davie', viii. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Ollier (1788–1859), publisher and author; see p. 100, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Milton, Sonnet to Lawrence, l. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'Hamlet', iv. v. 42.

4. Amy Lowell, printing this note either from the original or from a transcript in the collection of the late Mr. F. Holland Day (see 'John Keats', i. 202), believed it, although undated, to refer to the visit already planned on the 31st of October, because 'Timon of Athens' was on at Drury Lane for the ten days beginning on Monday, the 28th of October, and ending with the performance of Wednesday, the 6th of November.

5. Concerning the sonnet in this letter, Lord Houghton records that 'Haydon in his acknowledgement, suggested the omission of part of it; and also mentioned that he would forward it to Wordsworth'. The hiatus was not in the sonnet originally, the line being filled up with the words *in a distant Mart*; but in a second copy written by Keats to accompany Letter 6

Great Spirits now on Earth are sojourning  
 He of the Cloud the Cataract the Lake  
 Who on Helvellyn's summit wide awake  
 Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing  
 He of the Rose, the Violet, the Spring  
 The social Smile, the Chain for freedom's sake:  
 And lo!—whose stedfastness would never take  
 A Meaner Sound than Raphael's Whispering.  
 And other Spirits are there standing apart  
 Upon the Forehead of the Age to come;  
 These, These will give the World another heart  
 And other pulses—hear ye not the hum  
 Of mighty Workings in a distant Mart?  
 Listen awhile ye Nations, and be dumb!

Nov<sup>r</sup> 20—

Removed to 76. Cheapside

6. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Thursday 21  
 Nov. (1816).*

*Address:* Benjamin Robert Haydon | 41 Great Marlborough  
 Street.

*Imperfect postmark:* 21

Thursday Af<sup>tn</sup>.

My dear Sir,

Your Letter has filld me with a proud pleasure and  
 shall be kept by me as a stimulus to exertion—I begin  
 to fix my eye upon one horizon. My feelings entirely fall

those words are omitted and dashes are substituted. When this note was  
 printed in the second volume of 'Benjamin Robert Haydon: Correspondence  
 and Table Talk', the close was given thus:

'Yours imperfectly,  
 John Keats.'

But *unfeignedly* is certainly the word.

Colvin, both in his 'Men of Letters' *Keats* and in his 'Letters of John  
 Keats Letters to his Family and Friends', 1925, gives the thirteenth line of  
 the sonnet thus:

Of mighty workings in the human mart?

The source of this reading is not specified and in his enlarged life of Keats  
 (1917) Colvin prints 'in some distant mart?' The three 'great spirits' who  
 are the subject of the sonnet are, of course, Wordsworth, Hunt, and Haydon.

6. Lord Houghton says: 'It should here be remembered that Wordsworth  
 was not then what he is now, that he was confounded with much that was  
 thought ridiculous and unmanly in the new school, and that it was some-  
 thing for so young a student to have torn away the veil of prejudice then  
 hanging over that now-honoured name, and to have proclaimed his rever-

in with yours in regard to the El(l)ipsis and I glory in it—The Idea of your sending it to Wordsworth put me out of breath—you know with what Reverence I would send my Wellwishes to him—

Yours Sincerely  
John Keats<sup>1</sup>

ence in such earnest words, while so many men of letters could only scorn or jeer.' It was perhaps between this date and that of the next letter that the following excellent sonnet by Reynolds was written. I give it and the letter accompanying it, from the manuscript preserved in Haydon's journal, as a link in the chain of recollections whereby we may follow more or less closely the relations of Keats with a brilliant circle of friends:

Lamb's Cond<sup>t</sup>. Street

Friday morning 10 o'Clock

My dear Haydon,

As you are now getting 'golden opinions from all sorts of men', it was not fitting that One who is sincerely your Friend should be found wanting. Last night when you left me—I went to my bed—And the Sonnet on the other side absolutely started into my mind. I send it you, because I really *feel* your Genius, and because I know that things of this kind are the dearest rewards of Genius. It is not equal to anything you have yet had, in power, I know;—but it is sincere, and that is a recommendation. Will you, at my desire, send a copy to M<sup>r</sup> Keats, and say to him, how much I was pleased with his.

Yours affectionately  
J. H. Reynolds

#### SONNET TO HAYDON

[Printed in 'The Champion', Nov. 24, 1816, signed 'J.H.R.']

Haydon!—Thou'rt born to Immortality!—

I look full on;—and Fame's Eternal Star

Shines out o'er Ages which are yet afar;—

It hangs in all its radiance over thee!

I watch whole Nations o'er thy works sublime

Bending;—And breathing,—while their spirits glow,—

Thy name with that of the stern Angelo,

Whose giant genius braves the hate of Time!

But not alone in agony and strife

Art thou majestic;—Thy fancies bring

Sweets from the sweet:—The loveliness of life

Melts from thy pencil like the breath of Spring.

Soul is within thee:—Honours wait without thee:—

The wings of Raphael's Spirit play about thee!

J. H. Reynolds

Under this is written, 'Wild enthusiasm—B. R. Haydon, 1842'.

<sup>1</sup> The words 'Yours Sincerely John Keats' are cut from the holograph and written below with the endorsement—'The original autograph presented to Fra<sup>s</sup>. Bennock Esq<sup>r</sup> 78 Wood St<sup>r</sup> for—Longfellow Esq. the American Poet—Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> 1848. Fred W. Haydon.' In return Longfellow sent a copy of 'Kavanagh' inscribed 'F. Bennock, Esq. with the Author's regards. Boston May 1849'. The copy of the sonnet, as given overleaf, which accompanied this letter is written with great care as if the poet intended it for the painter to send to Wordsworth.



<sup>1</sup>Great Spirits now on earth are sojourning  
 He of the Cloud, the Cataract, the Lake  
 Who on Helvellyn's summit wide awake  
 Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing  
 He of the Rose, the Violet, the Spring  
 The social smile, the Chain for Freedom's sake;  
 And lo!—whose stedfastness would never take  
 A meaner sound than Raphael's Whispering.  
 And other Spirits are there standing apart  
 Upon the Forehead of the age to come;  
 These, these will give the World another Heart  
 And other Pulses—hear ye not the hum  
 Of might workings? -----  
 Listen awhile ye Nations and be dumb!

7. To CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE. *Tuesday 17 Dec. 1816.*

*Address:* Mr C. C. Clarke | Mr Towers's | Warner Street— | Clerkenwell—

*Postmarks:* LOMBARD ST. and DE 17 1816.

Tuesday—

My dear Charles,

You may now look at Minerva's Ægis with impunity, seeing that my awful Visage did not turn you into a John Doree you have accordingly a legitimate title to a Copy—I will use my interest to procure it for you.<sup>2</sup> I'll tell you what—I met Reynolds at Haydon's a few mornings since—he promised to be with me this evening and Yesterday I had the same promise from Severn and I must put you in Mind that on last All hallowmas' day you gave you(r) word that you would spend this Evening with me—so no putting off. I have done little to Endymion<sup>3</sup> lately—I hope to finish it in one more attack—I believe you (know) I went to Richards's<sup>4</sup>—it was so whoreson a Night that I

<sup>1</sup> Haydon retained this copy with Keats's letter and made a fresh copy for Wordsworth, sending it in a letter dated the 31st of December, 1816; see 'Correspondence and Table-Talk', ii. 30.

<sup>2</sup> This probably refers to a plaster cast of Haydon's life mask.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the short poem originally so called, but ultimately published in 1817 without a title. It begins with the words 'I stood tiptoe upon a little hill'.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly C. Richards of 18 Warwick Street, Golden Square, the printer of the 1817 volume, but more probably Thomas Richards of the Store-keeper's Office of the Ordnance Department in the Tower.

March 1817

Letter 8

stopped there all the next day—His Remembrances to you. (Ext from the common place Book of my Mind—Mem—Wednesday—Hampstead—call in Warner Street—a Sketch of Mr. Hunt.)—I will ever consider you my sincere and affectionate friend—you will not doubt that I am your's—

God bless you—

John Keats—

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. 3 March 1817.

No address or postmark.

3<sup>rd</sup> March 1817

My dear Keats,

Many thanks my dear fellow for your two noble sonnets<sup>1</sup>—I know not a finer image than the comparison of a Poet unable to express his high feelings to a sick eagle looking at the Sky!—when he must have remembered his former towerings amid the blaze of dazzling Sunbeams, in the pure expanse of glittering clouds!—now & then passing Angels on heavenly errands, lying at the will of the wind, with moveless wings; or pitching downward with a fiery rush, eager & intent on the objects of their seeking—You filled me with fury for an hour, and with admiration for ever

B R Haydon

I shall expect you & Clarke & Reynolds to night

My dear Keats,

I have really opened my letter to tell you how deeply I feel the high enthusiastic praise with which you have spoken of me in the first Sonnet—be assured you shall never repent it—the time shall come if God spare my life—when you will remember it with delight—

Once more God bless you

B R Haydon.

8. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. Sunday (9 March 1817).

No address or postmark.

Sunday Evening

My dear Reynolds

Your kindness<sup>2</sup> affects me so sensibly that I can merely

<sup>1</sup> On the Elgin Marbles.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. John M. Turnbull draws my attention to a review of Keats's first book which appeared in 'The Champion' for 9 March 1817 and which he, after comparing it with Reynolds's protest against the 'Quarterly Review' attack on Keats published in 'The Alfred, West of England Journal and General Advertiser' for 6 October 1818, confidently attributes to Reynolds. It certainly seems more likely that Keats in this letter is acknowledging, immediately upon receipt, a copy of a criticism dated Sunday the 9th of March than that he is referring to the sonnet addressed to him by Reynolds on the 27th of February.

put down a few mono-sentences—your criticism only makes me extremely anxious that I should not deceive you.

It's the finest thing by God—as Hazlitt would say. However I hope I may not deceive you.—There are some acquaintances of mine who will scratch their Beards and although I have, I hope, some Charity, I wish their nails may be long.—I will be ready at the time you mention in all Happiness.

There is a report that a young Lady of 16 has written the new Tragedy God bless her—I will know her by Hook or by Crook in less than a week—My Brother's and my Remembrances to your kind sisters.

yours most sincerely  
John Keats

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. March 1817.

Address: John Keats, | 76 Cheapside.

No postmark.

My dear Keats,

Consider this letter a sacred secret—Often have I sat by my fire after a day's effort, as the dusk approached, and a gauzy veil seemed dimming all things—and mused on what I had done, and with a burning glow on what I would do till filled with fury I have seen the faces of the mighty dead crowd into my room, and I have sunk down & prayed the great Spirit that I might be worthy to accompany these immortal beings in their immortal glories, and then I have seen each smile as it passed over me, and each shake his hand in awful encouragement. My dear Keats, the Friends who surrounded me were sensible to what talent I had,—but no one reflected my enthusiasm with that burning ripeness of soul, my heart yearned for sympathy,—believe me from my Soul in you I have (one) found one,—you add fire, when I am exhausted, & excite fury afresh—I offer my heart & intellect & experience—at first I feared your ardor might lead you to disregard the accumulated wisdom of ages in moral points—but the feelings put forth lately have delighted my soul—always consider principle of more value than genius—and you are safe—because on the score of genius, you can never be vehement enough. I have read your Sleep and Poetry—it is a flash of lightening that will round men from their occupations, and keep them trembling for the crash of thunder that *will* follow—

God bless you let our hearts be buried in each other

B R Haydon<sup>1</sup>

I'll be at Reynolds to night but latish

March 1817—

I confide these feelings to your honor.

<sup>1</sup> This highly remarkable letter, of which an extract is given in Haydon's 'Correspondence' (ii. 6), appears, like the previous one from the painter, to

1817

Letter 10

9. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Monday 17 March 1817.*

*Address:* 19 Lamb's Conduit Street.

*Postmark:* 17 MR 1817.

My dear Reynolds,

My Brothers are anxious that I should go by myself into the country—they have always been extremely fond of me, and now that Haydon has pointed out how necessary it is that I should be alone to improve myself, they give up the temporary pleasure of living with me continually for a great good which I hope will follow. So I shall soon be out of Town. You must soon bring all your present troubles to a close, and so must I, but we must, like the Fox, prepare for a fresh swarm of flies. Banish money—Banish sofas—Banish Wine—Banish Music; but right Jack Health, honest Jack Health, true Jack Health—Banish Health and banish all the world.<sup>1</sup> I must . . . myself . . .<sup>2</sup> if I come this evening, I shall horribly commit myself elsewhere. So I will send my excuses to them and M<sup>rs</sup>. Dilk(e) by my brothers.

Your sincere friend

John Keats

10. To CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE. *Tuesday 25 March 1817.*

*Address:* M<sup>r</sup> C. C. Clarke | M<sup>r</sup> Towers | Warner Street | Clerkenwell.

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 26 MR 1817.

Hampstead Tuesday Aft.

My dear Charles,

When shall we see each other again? In Heaven or in Hell, or in deep Places? In crooked Lane are we to meet or on Salisbury Plain? Or jumbled together at Drury

have been written before Keats carried out the intention of going into the Country, for it bears the address 'John Keats, 76 Cheapside'. The words 'I confide these feelings to your honor' were evidently an afterthought; they are written at the top of the third page which is otherwise blank.

9. Lord Houghton says Keats 'found himself on his first entrance into manhood . . . with many friends interested in his fortunes, and with the faith in the future which generally accompanies the highest genius. Mr. Haydon seems to have been to him a wise and prudent counsellor, and to have encouraged him to brace his powers by undistracted study, while he advised him to leave London for a while, and take more care of his health. The following note, written in March, shows that Keats did as he was recommended.'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. '1 Henry IV', II. iv. 528-35.

<sup>2</sup> The original letter is torn: hence these verbal omissions.—H.B.F.

Lane Door? For my part I know not where it is to be except that it may be possible to take place at M<sup>r</sup> Novello's tomorrow evening whither M<sup>r</sup> Hunt and myself are going and wher(e) M<sup>r</sup> Novello requested M<sup>r</sup> Hunt to invite you per Letter the which I offered to do. So we shall meet you there tomorrow evening—M<sup>r</sup> H. has got a great way into a Poem on the Nymphs,<sup>1</sup> and has said a number of beautiful things I have also written a few Lines and a Sonnet on Rimini<sup>2</sup> which I will copy for you against tomorrow—M<sup>r</sup> H. desires to be remembered to you.

Your's sincerely

John Keats—

N.B. we shall have a Hymn of M<sup>r</sup> H.'s<sup>3</sup> composing  
4 Voices—go it!

11. To TAYLOR and HESSEY. (April 1817.)

Address: Mess<sup>rs</sup> Taylor & Hessey.

No postmark.

L. C. S.

My dear Sirs

I am very unfortunate for I am just going out and have not a sheet of paper handy—so I can only beg pardon for this scrap—and thank you for your kindness which will be of little use for I will steal out of town in a day or two—excuse this shabby affair.

Yours

John Keats

12. To GEORGE and THOMAS KEATS. Tuesday 15  
April 1817.

Address: M<sup>r</sup> G. Keats | No. 1 Well Walk | Hampstead | Middx.

Postmarks: SOUTHAMPTON and 16 AP 1817.

Tuesday Morn—

My dear Brothers,

I am safe at Southampton—after having ridden three

<sup>1</sup> Published in 'Foliage', 1818.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. on Leigh Hunt's 'Story of Rimini'.

<sup>3</sup> Cowden Clarke has noted on the original letter, 'This evidently should be "N" (Novello)', but see Sir Humphrey Milford's note on the hymn 'To the Spirit great and good' in 'The Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt', Oxford University Press, 1923, p. 728, where he quotes from a letter from Vincent Novello to Hunt, 'the little hymn-tune which you composed in 1817',—adding that he (Novello) 'notes that the words were written and the melody and bass composed by Leigh Hunt'.

11. Amy Lowell, rightly I think, attributed this note to the period before Keats left London for the Isle of Wight on 14 April 1817. It was not sent through the post and was possibly delivered by a messenger who had brought a letter from the publishers. The 'L. C. S.' suggests Lamb's Conduit Street, where Reynolds lived.

stages outside and the rest in for it began to be very cold. I did not know the Names of any of the Towns I passed through all I can tell you is that sometimes I saw dusty Hedges sometimes Ponds—then nothing—then a little Wood with trees look you like Launce's Sister "as white as a Lilly and as small as a Wand"<sup>1</sup>—then came houses which died away into a few straggling Barns then came hedge trees aforesaid again. As the Lamp light crept along the following things were discovered. "long heath brown furze"<sup>2</sup>—Hurdles here and there half a Mile—Park palings when the Windows of a House were always discovered by reflection—One Nymph of Fountain *N.B. Stone*—lopped Trees—Cow ruminating—ditto Donkey—Man and Woman going gingerly along—William seeing his Sisters over the Heath—John waiting with a Lanthorn for his Mistress—Barbers Pole—Doctor's Shop—However after having had my fill of these I popped my Head out just as it began to Dawn—*N.B. this tuesday Morn saw the Sun rise*—of which I shall say nothing at present—I felt rather lonely this Morning at breakfast so I went and unbox'd a Shakspeare—"Here's my Comfort"<sup>3</sup>—I went immediately after Breakfast to the Southampton Water where I enquired for the Boat to the Isle of Wight as I intend seeing that place before I settle—it will go at 3 so shall I after having taken a Chop—I know nothing of this place but that it is long—tolerably broad—has bye streets—two or three Churches—a very respectable old Gate with two Lions to guard it—the Men and Women do not materially differ from those I have been in the Habit of seeing—I forgot to say that from dawn till half past six I went through a most delightful Country—some open Down but for the most part thickly wooded What surprised me most was an immense quantity of blooming Furze on each side the road cutting a most rural dash—The Southampton water when I saw it just now was no better than a low Water Water which did no more than answer my expectations—it will have mended its Manners by 3—From the W(h)arf are seen the Shores on each side stretching to the isle of Wight. You Haydon, Reynolds &c have been pushing each other out of my Brain by turns

<sup>1</sup> 'Two Gentlemen of Verona', II. iii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> 'Tempest', I. i. 70.

<sup>3</sup> 'Tempest', II. ii. 48.

—I have conned over every Head in Haydon's Picture—you must warn them not to be afraid should my Ghost visit them on Wednesday—tell Haydon to Kiss his Hand at Betty over the Way for me yea and to spy at her for me—I hope one of you will be competent to take part in a Trio while I am away—you need only ag(g)ravate your voices<sup>1</sup> a little—and mind not to speak Cues and all<sup>1</sup>—when you have said Rum-ti-ti—you must not be rum any more or else another will take up the ti-ti alone and then he might be taken God shield us,<sup>1</sup> for little better than a Titmouse—By the by talking of Titmouse, Remember me particularly to all my Friends—give my Love to the Miss Reynoldses and to Fanny who I hope you will soon see. Write to me soon about them all—and you George particularly how you get on with Wilkinson's plan—What could I have done without my Plaid? I don't feel inclined to write any more at present for I feel rather muzzy—you must be content with this fac simile of the rough plan of Aunt Dinah's Counterpane—<sup>2</sup>

Your's most affectionate Brother

John Keats—

Reynolds shall hear from me soon—<sup>3</sup>

13. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Thursday 17–Friday 18 April (1817).*

*Address:* To Mr J. H. Reynolds | 19 Lambs Conduit Str | London.

*Postmarks:* not recorded.

Carisbrooke April 17<sup>th</sup>.

My dear Reynolds,

Ever since I wrote to my Brothers from Southampton I have been in a taking, and at this moment I am about to become settled, for I have unpacked my books, put them into a snug corner—pinned up Haydon—Mary Queen (of) Scotts, and Milton with his daughters in a row. In the passage I found a head of Shakspeare which I had not before seen. It is most likely the same that George spoke

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Midsummer-Night's Dream', i. ii. 85; iii. i. 105–6; iii. i. 32.

<sup>2</sup> The letter was not 'crossed': this expression must refer to the somewhat irregular lines and shaky hand-writing, no doubt produced by the 'muzzy' condition—the result of travelling all night. Aunt Dinah is a shadowy character in 'Tristram Shandy'.

<sup>3</sup> This was written in the top margin of the second page of this two-page quarto letter.

so well of; for I like it extremely. Well—this head I have hung over my Books, just above the three in a row, having first discarded a french Ambassador—now this alone is a good morning's work.

Yesterday I went to Shanklin, which occasioned a great debate in my Mind whether I should live there or at Carisbrooke. Shanklin is a most beautiful place—sloping wood and meadow ground reaches round the Chine, which is a cleft between the Cliffs of the depth of nearly 300 feet at least. This cleft is filled with trees & bushes in the narrow parts; and as it widens becomes bare, if it were not for primroses on one side, which spread to the very verge of the Sea, and some fishermen's huts on the other, perched midway in the Ballustrades of beautiful green Hedges along their steps down to the sands.—But the sea, Jack, the sea—the little waterfall—then the white cliff—then St. Catherine's Hill—"the sheep in the meadows, the cows in the corn."—Then, why are you at Carisbrooke? say you—Because, in the first place, I should be at twice the Expense, and three times the inconvenience—next that from here I can see your continent—from a little hill close by, the whole north Angle of the Isle of Wight, with the water between us. In the 3<sup>d</sup> place, I see Carisbrooke Castle from my window,<sup>1</sup> and have found several delightful wood-alleys, and copses, and quick freshes.<sup>2</sup> As for Primroses—the Island ought to be called Primrose Island: that is, if the nation of Cowslips agree thereto, of which there are diverse Clans just beginning to lift up their heads and if an how the Rain holds whereby that is Birds eyes abate—Another reason of my fixing is that I am more in reach of the places around me—I intend to walk over the Island east—West—North South—I have not seen many specimens of Ruins—I don't think however I shall ever see one to surpass Carisbrooke Castle. The trench is o'ergrown with the smoothest turf, and the Walls with ivy—The Keep within side is one

<sup>1</sup> The house at Carisbrooke in which Keats lodged remained unidentified for many years. The question was revived in 1914 by a regular contributor to 'The Isle of Wight County Press', and as a result of researches then made by Mr. W. H. Wadham, the assistant overseer of Carisbrooke, it was definitely established that Canterbury House in Castle Road, which was formerly known as New Village, was the poet's home during his brief stay in the Isle of Wight. The view of the Castle is now obscured by trees.

<sup>2</sup> 'Tempest', iii. ii. 77.



Bower of ivy—a Colony of Jackdaws have been there many years. I dare say I have seen many a descendant of some old cawer who peeped through the Bars at Charles the first, when he was there in Confinement. On the road from Cowes to Newport I saw some extensive Barracks which disgusted me extremely with Government for placing such a Nest of Debauchery in so beautiful a place—I asked a man on the coach about this—and he said that the people had been spoiled—In the room where I slept at Newport I found this on the Window “O Isle spoil by the Military!” I must in honesty however confess that I did not feel very sorry at the idea of the Women being a little profligate—The wind is in a sulky<sup>1</sup> fit, and I feel that it would be no bad thing to be the favorite of some Fairy, who would give one the power of seeing how our Friends got on, at a Distance—I should like, of all Loves,<sup>2</sup> a sketch of you and Tom and George in ink which Haydon will do if you tell him how I want them—From want of regular rest, I have been rather *nervous*—and the passage in Lear—“Do you not hear the sea?”<sup>3</sup>—has haunted me intensely.

#### On the Sea.

<sup>4</sup>It keeps eternal Whisperings around  
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell  
 Gluts twice ten thousand Caverns; till the spell  
 Of Hecate<sup>5</sup> leaves them their old shadowy sound.  
 Often 'tis in such gentle temper found  
 That scarcely will the very smallest shell  
 Be moved for days from whence it sometime fell  
 When last the winds of Heaven were unbound.  
 O ye who have your eyeballs vext and tir'd  
 Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea  
 O ye whose Ears are din'd with uproar rude  
 Or fed too much with cloying melody—  
 Sit ye near some old Cavern's Mouth and brood  
 Until ye start as if the Sea Nymphs quired—

April 18<sup>th</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Patmore's transcript reads 'sultry' for 'sulky' in l. 13 and 'pen and ink' in l. 17.

<sup>2</sup> 'Midsummer-Night's Dream', II. ii. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'King Lear', IV. vi. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Woodhouse notes, 'O Sea obliterated'.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 'King Lear', I. i. 112.

Will you have the goodness to do this? Borrow a Botanical Dictionary—turn to the words Laurel and Prunus show the explanations to your sisters and Mr<sup>s</sup> Dilk(e) and without more ado let them send me the Cups Basket and Books they trifled and put off and off while I was in Town—ask them what they can say for themselves—ask Mr<sup>s</sup> Dilk(e) wherefore she does so distress me—Let me know how Jane has her health—the Weather is unfavorable for her.—Tell George and Tom to write.—I'll tell you what—on the 23<sup>rd</sup> was Shakespeare born—now if I should receive a Letter from you and another from my Brothers on that day 'twould be a parlous good thing—Whenever you write say a Word or two on some Passage in Shakespeare that may have come rather new to you; which must be continually happening, notwithstanding that we read the same Play forty times—for instance, the following, from the Tempest, never struck me so forcibly as at present,

“Urchins

*Shall, for that vast of Night that they may work,  
All exercise on thee—”*

How can I help bringing to your mind the Line—

*In the dark backward and abysm of time.<sup>1</sup>*

I find that I cannot exist without poetry—without eternal poetry—half the day will not do—the whole of it—I began with a little, but habit has made me a Leviathan—I had become all in a Tremble from not having written any thing of late—the Sonnet over leaf did me some good. I slept the better last night for it—this Morning, however, I am nearly as bad again—Just now I opened Spencer, and the first Lines I saw were these.—

“The noble Heart that harbors virtuous thought,  
And is with Child of glorious great intent,  
Can never rest, until it forth have brought  
Th’ eternal Brood of Glory excellent—”<sup>2</sup>

Let me know particularly about Haydon; ask him to write to me about Hunt, if it be only ten lines—I hope all is well

<sup>1</sup> These passages occur in Act I, Sc. ii, of ‘The Tempest’. Dr. Caroline F. E. Spurgeon in her invaluable study of ‘Keats’s Shakespeare’ shows that both passages were underlined by Keats.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Faerie Queen’, I. v. 1–4.

—I shall forthwith begin my *Endymion*,<sup>1</sup> which I hope I shall have got some way into by the time you come, when we will read our verses in a delightful place I have set my heart upon near the Castle—Give my Love to your Sisters severally—To George and Tom—Remember me to Rice M<sup>r</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Dilk(e) and all we know—

Your sincere Friend  
John Keats.

Direct J. Keats, M<sup>rs</sup> Cook's new Village, Carisbrooke

14. To LEIGH HUNT. *Saturday 10 May 1817.*

Address: Leigh Hunt Esq<sup>re</sup> | P. B. Shelley's Esq<sup>re</sup> | G<sup>t</sup> Marlow | Bucks—

Postmarks: 11 MY 1817 and 12 MY 1817.

Margate May 10<sup>th</sup>—

My dear Hunt,

The little Gentleman that sometimes lurks in a gossip's bowl ought to have come in very likeness of a *coasted*<sup>2</sup> crab and choaked me outright for not having answered your Letter ere this—however you must not suppose that I was in Town to receive it; no, it followed me to the isle of Wight and I got it just as I was going to pack up for Margate, for reasons which you anon shall hear. On arriving at this treeless affair I wrote to my Brother George to request C. C. C.<sup>3</sup> to do the thing you wot of respecting Rimini; and George tells me he has undertaken it with great Pleasure; so I hope there has been an understanding between you for many Proofs—C. C. C. is well acquainted with Bensley.<sup>4</sup> Now why did you not send the Key of your Cupboard which I know was full of Papers? We would have lock'd them all in a trunk together with those you told me to destroy; which indeed I did not do for fear of demolishing Receipts. There not being a more unpleasant thing in the world (saving a thousand and one others) than to pay a Bill twice. Mind you—old Wood's a very Varmant—sharded in Covetousness—And now I am upon a horrid subject—what a horrid one you were upon

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the real 'Endymion', to be published in the following year.

<sup>2</sup> Keats wrote 'coasted' because he was living at Margate, cf. 'Midsummer-Night's Dream', II. i. 47–8,

'Sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,  
In very likeness of a roasted crab.'

<sup>3</sup> Charles Cowden Clarke.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Bensley (d. 11 September 1835), who printed the second edition of 'Rimini', 1817.

last sunday and well you handled it.<sup>1</sup> The last Examiner was (a) Battering Ram against Christianity—Blasphemy—Tertullian—Erasmus—Sr. Philip Sidney. And then the dreadful Petzelians and their expiation by Blood—and do Christians shudder at the same thing in a Newspaper which the (y) attribute to their God in its most aggravated form? What is to be the end of this? I must mention Hazlitt's Southey<sup>2</sup>—O that he had left out the grey hairs!

<sup>1</sup> Hunt's article in 'The Examiner' for the 4th of May 1817 here alluded to was the seventh of a series of Letters to the English People. It treated of religious intolerance, defined *blasphemy* from different points of view, and reduced *ad absurdum* the blasphemy prosecutions of the day. The term 'Petzelians' needs elucidation, especially as the word was formerly printed 'Patzelicians'. The sect does not figure in Hunt's Seventh Letter; but in another part of the paper is the following paragraph:—

'VIENNA, APRIL 16.—Letters from Upper Austria speak of a Sect formed there, called Petzelians, from the name of the founder, Petzel, a Priest of Branau. Atrocious accounts are related of this Sect. In imitation of the Spenceans of England, they preach the equality and community of property, and they sacrifice (I dare scarcely touch upon these horrors) men, to purify others from their sins. It is added, that this Sect sacrificed, during Passion Week, several men, who died in the most horrible torments. A girl of 13 was put to death in the village of Afflewang, on Good Friday. Seven men have been the victims of this abominable faith. The author of the Sect, Petzel, with 86 followers, are arrested: military detachments have been quartered in the villages, and tranquillity has been restored to the hearts of the wretched inhabitants. Petzel has been sent to the fortress of Spielberg, where he will soon be brought to trial.'—H.B.F.

<sup>2</sup> Hazlitt's 'Southey', in the 'Examiner' just mentioned, was the first part, to be followed by a second and third, of a review of a pamphlet entitled 'A Letter to William Smith, Esq. M.P. from Robert Southey, Esq.' (Murray, 1817). The occasion of the letter was the fact that Mr. Smith, in a discussion in Parliament, had compared certain passages in 'The Quarterly Review' with the opinions held by Southey twenty-three years earlier, when he wrote 'Wat Tyler', a comparison made pointedly to the disadvantage of Southey. To appreciate fully the soundness of the young poet's taste in this matter, we must have the particular passage in evidence. Here it is:—

'As some persons bequeath their bodies to the surgeons to be dissected after their death, Mr. Southey publicly exposes his mind to be anatomised while he is living. He lays open his character to the scalping knife, guides the philosophic hand in its painful researches, and on the bald crown of our *petit tondu*, in vain concealed under withered bay-leaves and a few contemptible grey hairs, you see the organ of vanity triumphant—sleek, smooth, round, perfect, polished, horned and shining, as it were in a transparency. This is the handle of his intellect, the index of his mind; "the guide, the anchor of his purest thoughts, and soul of all his moral being"; the clue to the labyrinth of all his tergiversations and contradictions; the *medius terminus* of his political logic.'

The 'concluding thunderclap', and the sentence 'like a whale's back in the sea of prose', are as follows:—

'In advocating the cause of the French people, Mr. Southey's principles and his interest were at variance, and therefore he quitted his principles when he saw a good opportunity: in taking up the cause of the Allies, his principles and his interest became united and thenceforth indissoluble. His engagement to his first love, the Republic, was only upon liking; his

Or that they had been in any other Paper not concluding with such a Thunderclap—that sentence about making a Page of the feelings of a whole life appears to me like a Whale's back in the Sea of Prose. I ought to have said a word on Shakspeare's Christianity—there are two, which I have not looked over with you, touching the thing: the one for, the other against. That in favor is in Measure for Measure Act 2. S. 2 Isab. Alas! alas!

Why all the Souls that were, were forfeit once  
And he that might the vantage best have took,  
Found out the Remedy—

marriage to Legitimacy is *for better, for worse*, and nothing but death shall part them. Our simple Laureate was sharp upon his hoyden Jacobin mistress, who brought him no dowry, neither place nor pension, who “found him poor and kept him so,” by her prudish notions of virtue. He divorced her, in short, for nothing but the spirit and success with which she resisted the fraud and force to which the old bawd Legitimacy was for ever resorting to overpower her resolution and fidelity. He said she was a virago, a cunning gipsy, always in broils about her honour and the inviolability of her person, and always getting the better in them, furiously scratching the face or cruelly tearing off the hair of the said pimping old lady, who would never let her alone, night or day. But since her foot slipped one day on the ice, and the detestable old hag tripped up her heels, and gave her up to the kind keeping of the Allied Sovereigns, Mr. Southey has devoted himself to her more fortunate and wealthy rival: he is becoming uxorious in his second matrimonial connection; and though his false Duessa has turned out a very witch, a foul, ugly witch, a murderess, a sorceress, perjured and a harlot, drunk with insolence, mad with power, a griping rapacious wretch, bloody, luxurious, wanton, malicious, not sparing steel, or poison, or gold, to gain her ends—bringing famine, pestilence, and death in her train—infecting the air with her thoughts, killing the beholders with her looks, claiming mankind as her property, and using them as her slaves—driving every thing before her, and playing the devil wherever she comes, Mr. Southey sticks to her in spite of every thing, and for very shame lays his head in her lap, paddles with the palms of her hands, inhales her hateful breath, leers in her eyes and whispers in her ears, calls her little fondling names, Religion, Morality, and Social Order, takes for his motto,

“Be to her faults a little blind,  
Be to her virtues very kind”—

sticks close to his filthy bargain, and will not give her up, because she keeps him, and he is down in her will. Faugh!

“What's here?

Gold! yellow, glittering, precious gold!

———The wappened widow,

Whom the spittle-house and ulcerous sores

Would heave the gorge at, this embalms and spices

To the April day again.”

The above passage is, we fear, written in the style of Aretin, which Mr. Southey condemns in the ‘Quarterly’. It is at least a very sincere style: Mr. Southey will never write so, till he can keep in the same mind for three and twenty years together. Why should not one make a sentence of a page long, out of the feelings of one's whole life? The early Protestant Divines wrote such prodigious long sentences from the sincerity of their religious and political opinions. Mr. Coleridge ought not to imitate them.’—H.B.F.

That against is in Twelfth Night. Act 3. S. 2. Maria—for there is no Christian, that means to be saved by believing rightly, can ever believe such impossible Passages of grossness! Before I come to the Nymphs I must get through all disagreeables—I went to the Isle of Wight—thought so much about Poetry so long together that I could not get to sleep at night—and moreover, I know not how it was, I could not get wholesome food—By this means in a Week or so I became not over capable in my upper Stories, and set off pell mell for Margate, at least 150 Miles—because forsooth I fancied that I should like my old Lodging here, and could contrive to do without Trees. Another thing I was too much in Solitude, and consequently was obliged to be in continual burning of thought as an only resource.<sup>1</sup> However Tom is with me at present and we are very comfortable. We intend though to get among some Trees.<sup>2</sup> How have you got on among them? How are the Nymphs?<sup>2</sup> I suppose they have led you a fine dance—Where are you now. In Judea, Cappadocia, or the Parts of Lybia about Cyrene, Strangers from “Heaven, Hues and Prototypes. I wager you have given given several new turns to the old saying “Now the Maid was fair and pleasant to look on” as well as mad(e) a little variation in “once upon a time” perhaps too you have rather varied “thus endeth the first Lesson” I hope you have made a Horseshoe business of—“unsuperfluous lift” “faint Bowers” and fibrous roots. I vow that I have been down in the Mouth lately at this Work. These last two day(s) however I have felt more confident—I have asked myself so often why I should be a Poet more than other Men,—seeing how great a thing it is,—how great things are to be gained by it—What a thing to be in the Mouth of Fame—that at last the Idea has grown so monstrously beyond my seeming Power of attainment that the other day I nearly consented with myself to drop into a Phaeton—yet ’tis a disgrace to fail even in a huge attempt, and at this moment I drive the thought from me. I began my Poem about a Fortnight

<sup>1</sup> His friend Dilke characterizes this passage, from ‘I went’, as ‘An exact picture of the man’s mind and character’, adding, ‘He could at any time have “thought himself out” mind and body. Thought was intense with him, and seemed at times to assume a reality that influenced his conduct—and I have no doubt helped to wear him out.’—H.B.F.

<sup>2</sup> Allusions to Hunt’s ‘Foliage’, published in 1818 and containing ‘The Nymphs’.

since and have done some every day except travelling ones—Perhaps I may have done a good deal for the time but it appears such a Pin's Point to me that I will not copy any out. When I consider that so many of these Pin points go to form a Bodkin point (God send I end not my Life with a bare Bodkin,<sup>1</sup> in its modern sense) and that it requires a thousand bodkins to make a Spear bright enough to throw any light to posterity—I see that nothing but continual uphill Journeying! Now is there any thing more unpleasant (it may come among the thousand and one)<sup>2</sup> than to be so journeying and miss the Goal at last. But I intend to whistle all these cogitations into the Sea where I hope they will breed Storms violent enough to block up all exit from Russia. Does Shelley go on telling strange Stories of the Death of Kings?<sup>3</sup> Tell him there are strange Stories of the death of Poets—some have died before they were conceived “how do you make that out Master Vellum”.<sup>4</sup> Does Mrs. S. cut Bread and Butter as neatly as ever? Tell her to procure some fatal Scissors and cut the thread of Life of all to be disappointed Poets. Does Mrs. Hunt tear linen in half as straight as ever? Tell her to tear from the book of Life all blank Leaves. Remember me to them all—to Miss Kent<sup>5</sup> and the little ones all.

Your sincere friend

John Keats alias Junkets—

You shall know where we move—

<sup>1</sup> ‘Hamlet’, III. i. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 22, l. 4, from foot.

<sup>3</sup> In ‘Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries’ Hunt records that ‘Mr. Shelley was fond of quoting the passage here alluded to in Shakspeare, and of applying it in the most unexpected manner.

“For God’s sake, let us sit upon the ground,  
And tell strange stories of the deaths of kings.”

Going with me to town once in the Hampstead stage, in which our only companion was an old lady, who sat silent and stiff after the English fashion, he startled her into a look of the most ludicrous astonishment by saying abruptly; “Hunt,

For God’s sake, let us sit upon the ground,” &c. (‘Richard II’, III. ii. 155–6).

The old lady looked on the coach-floor, as if she expected to see us take our seats accordingly’. Hunt adds—‘The reader . . . will be touched by the melancholy anticipations that follow, and that are made in so good-humoured a manner’. He explains that ‘Junkets’ was ‘an appellation that was given him in play upon his name, and in allusion to his friends of Fairy-land.’—H.B.F.

<sup>4</sup> Addison, ‘The Drummer, or the Haunted House’, IV. i.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Kent, Hunt’s sister-in-law, author of ‘Flora Domestica’ (1823) and ‘Sylvan Sketches’ (1825). There are references to Keats in both these books.

1817

Letter 14

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. (Saturday  
10) May 1817.

Address: John Keats | Post Office— | Margate

11 May 1817

My dear Keats,

I have been swearing to write you every hour this week—but have been so interrupted that the Post man has rang his bell every night in vain, with a sound that made my heart quake—I think you did quite right to leave the Isle of White if you felt no relief & being quite alone after study—you may now devote your eight hours a day with just as much seclusion as ever—Do not give way to any forebodings they are nothing more than the over eager anxieties of a great Spirit stretched beyond its strength, and then relapsing for a time to languid inefficiency—Every man of great views, is at times thus tormented—but begin again where you left off—without hesitation or fear—*Trust in God* with all your might my dear Keats—This dependance with your own energy will give you strength, & hope & comfort—In all my troubles, & wants, & distresses, here I found a refuge—from my soul I declare to you, I never applied for help or consolation, or strength—but I found it. I always arose with a refreshed fury—an iron clenched firmness, and chrystal piety of feeling, that sent me streaming on with a repulsive power against the troubles of life that attempted to stop me, as if I was a cannon shot, darting through feathers—never despair while there is this path open to you—by habitual exercise, you will have habitual intercourse, and constant companionship; and in every want, turn to the great Star of your hopes with a delightful confidence which will never be disappointed—I love you like my own Brother, beware for God's sake of the delusions and sophistications that is ripping up the talent and respectability of our Friend (Leigh Hunt)—he will go out of the World the victim of his own weakness & the dupe of his own self delusions—with the contempt of his enemies and sorrow of his Friends—the cause he undertook to support injured by his own neglect of character—his family disordered, his children neglected, himself, petted & his prospects ruined!—of this I am sure and keep this letter and you will find this is so—I speak this in confidence & pain—I write this at breakfast—for I am able to work like a hero—and wish to God you would come up to Town for a day or two when you are inclined—that I may put your head in with glory & honor—I have rubbed in Wordsworth's & advanced the whole—God bless you My dear Keats go on, dont despair, collect incident, study characters, read Shakespeare and trust in Providence—and you will do—you must, you shall—<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The signature has been torn away, but it is clear that the letter ends here. The allusion to the postman vainly ringing his bell points to the time when letters were collected in London by postmen carrying hand-bells.



15. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Saturday & Sunday 10-11 May 1817.*

*Address:* Benjamin Robert Haydon | 41 Great Marlborough Street | London—

*Postmarks:* MARGATE and 13 MY 1817.

Margate Saturday Eve

My dear Haydon,

Let Fame, which all hunt after in their Lives,  
Live register'd upon our brazen tombs,  
And so grace us in the disgrace of death:  
When spite of cormorant devouring time  
The endeavour of this present breath may buy  
That Honor which shall bate his Scythe's keen edge  
And make us heirs of all eternity.<sup>1</sup>

To think that I have no right to couple myself with you in this speech would be death to me so I have e'en written it—and I pray God that our brazen Tombs be nigh neighbors. It cannot be long first the endeavor of this present breath will soon be over—and yet it is as well to breathe freely during our sojourn—it is as well if you have not been teased with that Money affair—that bill-pestilence. However I must think that difficulties nerve the Spirit of a Man—they make our Prime Objects a Refuge as well as a Passion. The Trumpet of Fame is as a tower of Strength the ambitious bloweth it and is safe. I suppose by your telling me not to give way to forebodings George has mentioned to you what I have lately said in my Letters to him—truth is I have been in such a state of Mind as to read over my Lines and hate them. I am “one that gathers Samphire dreadful trade”<sup>2</sup> the Cliff of Poesy Towers above me—yet when, Tom who meets with some of Pope's Homer in Plutarch's Lives reads some of those to me they seem like Mice<sup>3</sup> to mine. I read and write about eight hours a day. There is an old saying well begun is half done”—'tis a bad one. I would use instead—Not begun at all till half done” so according to that I have not

<sup>1</sup> 'Love's Labour's Lost', I. i. 1-7: 'which' in line 1 should be 'that', and 'so' in line 3 should be 'then'. Lord Houghton says of the reference to the 'brazen tombs'—'To the copy of this letter, given me by Mr. Haydon on the 14th of May, 1846, a note was affixed at this place, in the words "Perhaps they may be".' On the original letter stands the note 'I wonder if they will be. B R Haydon'.

<sup>2</sup> 'King Lear', iv. vi. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. iv. vi. 19.

begun my Poem and consequently (a priori) can say nothing about it. Thank God! I do begin arduously where I leave off, notwithstanding occasional depressions: and I hope for the support of a High Power while I clime this little eminence<sup>1</sup> and especially in my Years of more momentous Labor. I remember your saying that you had notions of a good Genius presiding over you. I have of late had the same thought—for things which (I) do half at Random are afterwards confirmed by my judgment in a dozen features of Propriety. Is it too daring to Fancy Shakspeare this Presidor? When in the Isle of Whight I met with a Shakspeare in the Passage of the House at which I lodged—it comes nearer to my idea of him than any I have seen—I was but there a Week yet the old Woman<sup>2</sup> made me take it with me though I went off in a hurry<sup>3</sup>—Do you not think this is ominous of good? I am glad you say every Man of great Views is at times tormented as I am—

*Sunday Aft.* This Morning I received a letter from George by which it appears that Money Troubles are to follow us up for some time to come perhaps for always—these vexations are a great hindrance to one—they are not like Envy and detraction stimulants to further exertion as being immediately relative and reflected on at the same time with the prime object—but rather like a nettle leaf or two in your bed. So now I revoke my Promise of finishing my Poem by the Autumn which I should have done had I gone on as I have done—but I cannot write while my spirit is fevered in a contrary direction and I am now sure of having plenty of it this Summer. At this moment I am in no enviable Situation—I feel that I am not in a Mood to write any to day; and it appears that the loss of it is the beginning of all sorts of irregularities. I am extremely glad that a time must come when every thing will leave not a wrack behind.<sup>4</sup> You tell me never

<sup>1</sup> Ib. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Cook.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Bailey, writing from Ceylon on the 7th of May 1849, told Richard Monckton Milnes that the portrait was sent to him by Charles Brown together with Keats's copy of 'Auctores Mythographi Latini', 1742, in July 1823.

<sup>4</sup> Keats, who first wrote 'rack' and then squeezed in the 'w', again has 'The Tempest' in mind. Dr. Spurgeon gives this passage as marked by Keats:

And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind.—iv. i. 155-6.

to despair—I wish it was as easy for me to observe the saying—truth is I have a horrid Morbidity of Temperament which has shown itself at intervals—it is I have no doubt the greatest Enemy and stumbling block I have to fear—I may even say that it is likely to be the cause of my disappointment. However every ill has its share of good—this very bane would at any time enable me to look with an obstinate eye on the Devil Himself—ay to be as proud of being the lowest of the human race as Alfred could be in being of the highest. I feel confident I should have been a rebel Angel had the opportunity been mine. I am very sure that you do love me as your own Brother—I have seen it in your continual anxiety for me—and I assure you that your welfare and fame is and will be a chief pleasure to me all my Life. I know no one but you who can be fully sensible of the turmoil and anxiety, the sacrifice of all what is called comfort the readiness to Measure time by what is done and to die in 6 hours could plans be brought to conclusions—the looking upon the Sun the Moon the Stars, the Earth and its contents as materials to form greater things—that is to say ethereal things—but here I am talking like a Madman greater things that our Creator himself made!! I wrote to Hunt yesterday—scarcely know what I said in it. I could not talk about Poetry in the way I should have liked for I was not in humor with either his or mine. His self delusions<sup>1</sup> are very lamentable they have inticed him into a Situation which I should be less eager after than that of a galley Slave—what you observe thereon is very true must be in time.

Perhaps it is a self delusion to say so—but I think I could not be deceived in the Manner that Hunt is—may I die tomorrow if I am to be. There is no greater Sin after the 7 deadly than to flatter oneself into an idea of being a great Poet—or one of those beings who are privileged to wear out their Lives in the pursuit of Honor—how comfortable a feel it is that such a Crime must bring its heavy Penalty? That if one be a Selfdeluder accounts will be balanced? I am glad you are hard at Work—'t will now soon be done—I long to see Wordsworth's as well as to have mine in:<sup>2</sup> but I would rather not show my face in Town till the end of the Year—if that will be time enough

<sup>1</sup> See Haydon to Keats on Hunt, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. their portraits in Haydon's 'Entry of Christ into Jerusalem'.

—if not I shall be disappointed if you do not write for me even when you think best. I never quite despair and I read Shakspeare—indeed I shall I think never read any other Book much—Now this might lead me into a long Confab but I desist. I am very near Agreeing with Hazlit that Shakspeare is enough for us—By the by what a tremendous Southean Article his last was—I wish he had left out “grey hairs” It was very gratifying to meet your remarks of the Manuscript<sup>1</sup>—I was reading Anthony and Cleopatra when I got the Paper and there are several Passages applicable to the events you commentate. You say that he arrived by degrees and not by any single struggle to the height of his ambition—and that his Life had been as common in particulars as other Mens. Shakspeare makes Enobarb say—Where’s Antony Eros—He’s walking in the garden—thus: *and spurns the rush that lies before him*; cries fool, Lepidus! In the same scene we find: “let determined things to destiny hold unbewailed their way.” Dolabella says of Antony’s Messenger

“An argument that he is pluck’d when hither  
He sends so poor a pinion of his wing”—Then again,  
Eno—“I see Men’s Judgments are

A parcel of their fortunes; and things outward  
Do draw the inward quality after them,

To suffer all alike”—The following applies well to Bertram<sup>2</sup>

“Yet he that can endure  
To follow with allegiance a fallen Lord,  
Does conquer him that did his Master conquer,  
And earns a place i’ the story”

But how differently does Buonap bear his fate from Antony!

<sup>1</sup> Haydon’s ‘remarks of the Manuscript’ are the views put forward by the painter in a letter to ‘The Examiner’ for the 4th of May 1817 on the subject of a book which made a great stir at the time,—‘Manuscrit Venu de St. Hélène’. The conclusion is as follows:—‘Never was a little book so interesting! never was such a laying open of characters, events, and circumstances, mutually acting on each other!—never were words so pregnant with meaning, or the mightiest events so concisely expressed!—never were political errors so courageously acknowledged, or the deepest crimes so sophistically glossed. It can only proceed from a mind long used to such conclusions. And if it be not by Napoleon, it is from an intellect of similar construction.’—H.B.F.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is clearly to General Bertrand who accompanied Napoleon to Elba and St. Helena. All these passages from ‘Anthony and Cleopatra’ are marked in Keats’s Shakespeare: they occur in Act III, Scenes v, vi, x, and xi.

'Tis good too that the Duke of Wellington has a good Word or so in the Examiner. A Man ought to have the Fame he deserves—and I begin to think that detracting from him as well as from Wordsworth is the same thing. I wish he had a little more taste—and did not in that respect “deal in Lieutenantry”.<sup>1</sup> You should have heard from me before this—but in the first place I did not like to do so before I had got a little way in the 1st Book and in the next as G.<sup>2</sup> told me you were going to write I delayed till I had hea⟨r⟩d from you. Give my Respects the next time you write to the North and also to John Hunt—<sup>3</sup> Remember me to Reynolds and tell him to write—Ay, and when you sent Westward tell your Sister<sup>4</sup> that I mentioned her in this—So now in the Name of Shakespeare Raphael and all our Saints I commend you to the care of heaven!

Your everlasting friend

John Keats—

16. To TAYLOR and HESSEY. Friday 16 May 1817.

Address: Mess<sup>rs</sup> Taylor & Hessey | Publishers | Fleet Street—

Postmark: 17 MY 1817.

Margate May 16—

My dear Sirs,

I am extremely indebted to you for your liberality in the Shape of manufactured rag value £20 and shall immediately proceed to destroy some of the Minor Heads of that spr⟨i⟩ng-headed Hydra<sup>5</sup> the Dun—To conquer which the Knight need have no Sword, Shield Cuirass Cuisses

<sup>1</sup> 'Antony and Cleopatra', III. ix. 39.

<sup>2</sup> George Keats.

<sup>3</sup> Probably the respects were for Wordsworth. John Hunt (1775–1848) was the proprietor of the 'Examiner'.

<sup>4</sup> Harriet Haydon. She had married Dr. James Haviland in 1815.

16. Having now started upon 'Endymion', Keats had, as Lord Houghton records, 'come to an arrangement with Messrs. Taylor and Hessey (who seem to have cordially appreciated his genius) respecting its publication'. In regard to the 'tangible proofs of their interest in his welfare' indicated in the following letters, the biographer observes that Keats's 'reliance on their generosity was, probably, only equal to his trust in his own abundant powers of repayment. The physical symptoms he alludes to had nothing dangerous about them and merely suggested some prudence in his mental labours. Nor had he then experienced the harsh repulse of ungenial criticism, but, although never unconscious of his own deficiencies, nor blind to the jealousies and spites of others, still believed himself to be accompanied on his path to fame by the sympathies and congratulations of all the fellow-men he cared for: and they were many'.—H.B.F.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 'I Henry IV', v. iv. 25.

Herbadgeon Spear Casque, Greves, Pauldrons Spurs Chevron or any other scaly commodity, but he need only take the Bank Note of Faith and Cash of Salvation,<sup>1</sup> and set out against the Monster invoking the aid of no Archimago<sup>2</sup> or Urganda<sup>3</sup>—and finger me the Paper light as the Sybils Leaves in Virgil whereat the Fiend skulks off with his tail between his Legs. Touch him with this enchanted Paper and he whips you his head away as fast as a Snail's Horn—but then the horrid Propensity he has to put it up again has discouraged many very valliant Knights—He is such a never ending still beginning sort of a Body—like my Landlady of the Bell—I should conjecture that the very Spright that the “g(r)een sour ringlets makes whereof the Ewe not bites”<sup>4</sup> had manufactured it of the dew fallen on said sour ringlets—I think I could make a nice little A(l)legorical Poem called “the Dun”—Where we wo(u)ld have the Castle of Carelessness—the Draw Bridge of Credit—Sir Novelty Fashion's(s)<sup>5</sup> expedition against the City of Taylors—&c &c.— — I went day by day at my Poem for a Month—at the end of which time the other day I found my Brain so overwrought that I had neither Rhyme nor reason in it—so was obliged to give up for a few days—I hope soon to be able to resume my Work—I have endeavoured to do so once or twice but to no Purpose—instead of Poetry—I have a swimming in my head—And feel all the effects of a Mental Debauch—lowness of Spirits—anxiety to go on without the Power to do so which does not at all tend to my ultimate Progression—However tomorrow I will begin my next Month. This Evening I go to Canterbury—having got tired of Margate—I was not right in my head when I came—At Cantv. I hope the Remembrance of Chaucer<sup>6</sup> will set me forward like a Billiard-Ball—I am gald to hear of M<sup>r</sup> T's health and of the Wellfare of the In-town-Stayers” and think Reynolds will like his trip—I have some idea of seeing the Continent some time in the Summer—

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ephesians, vi. 16, 17, and end of Letter 20.

<sup>2</sup> In ‘The Faerie Queene’, Books I, II.

<sup>3</sup> In ‘Amadis of Gaul’.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Tempest’, v. i. 37–8.

<sup>5</sup> In Colley Cibber's ‘Love's Last Shift’ (1695–6). Sir Novelty became Lord Foppington in Vanbrugh's ‘Relapse’ (1696).

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Edmund Blunden has some volumes of Chaucer with pencillings by Keats in them.

In repeating how sensible I am of your kindness I remain

Your Obedient Serv<sup>t</sup> and Friend—  
John Keats—

I shall be very happy to hear any little intelligence in the literary or friendly way when you have time to scribble.

Messrs Taylor and Hessey.—

17. To TAYLOR and HESSEY. Tuesday 10 June 1817.

Address: Mess<sup>rs</sup> Taylor and Hessey | Publishers | Fleet Street—

Postmarks: LAMBS CONDUIT ST. and 10 JU 1817.

Tuesday Morn—

My dear Sirs,

I must endeavor to lose my Maidenhead with respect to money Matters as soon as possible—and I will to(o)—so here goes. A Couple of Duns that I thought would be silent till the beginning, at least, of next Month (when I am certain to be on my legs for certain sure) have opened upon me with a cry most “untunable;” never did you hear such un “gallant chiding”<sup>1</sup>

Now you must know I am not desolate but have thank God 25 good Notes in my fob—but then you know I laid them by to write with and would stand at Bay a fortnight ere they should grab me. In a Month’s time I must pay—but it would relieve my Mind if I owed you instead of these Pelican duns.<sup>2</sup>

I am affraid you will say I have “wound about with circumstance”<sup>3</sup> when I should have asked plainly. However as I said I am a little maidenish or so—and I feel my virginity come strong upon me—the while I request the  
 £                      £  
 loan of a 20 and a 10—which if you would enclose to me I would acknowledge and save myself a hot forehead. I am sure you are confident in my responsibility—and in the sense (of) squareness that is always in me.

Your obliged friend  
John Keats—

<sup>1</sup> ‘Midsummer-Night’s Dream’, iv. i. 121, 130.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ‘King Lear’, iii. iv. 74.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ‘Merchant of Venice’, i. i. 155.

1817

Letter 18

18. To JANE and MARIANE REYNOLDS. (Friday 5 Sept. 1817.)

Address: Miss Reynolds | Mr<sup>s</sup> Earle's | Little Hampton | Sussex.

Postmarks: 5 SE and 6 SE 1817

Oxf(ord)—

My dear friends,

You are I am glad to hear comfortable at Hampton where I hope you will receive the Biscuits we ate the other night at Little Brittain. I hope you found them good. There you are among Sands Stocks Stones Pebbles Beaches Cliffs Rocks Deeps Shallows Weeds Ships Boats (at a distance) Carrots—turnips Sun Moon and Stars and all those sort of things—here am I among Colleges, Halls Stalls plenty of Trees thank God—plenty of Water thank heaven—plenty of Books thank the Muses—plenty of Snuff—thank Sir Walter Raleigh—plenty of Sagars, ditto—plenty of flat Country—thank Tellus's rol(l)ing pin. I'm on the Sofa—Buonapa(r)te is on the Snuff Box—but you are by the (sea) side—argal you bathe you walk—you say how beautiful—find out resemblances between waves and Camels—rocks and dancing Masters—fireshovels and telescopes—Dolphins and Ma don as—which word by the way I must acquaint you was derived from the Syriac and came down in a way which neither of you I am sorry to say are at all capable of comprehending: but as a time may come when by your occasional converse with me you may arrive at 'Something like prophetic Strain'<sup>1</sup> I will unbar the Gates of my Pride and let my Conde(s)cension stalk forth like a Ghost at the Circus<sup>2</sup>—The Word Ma-don-a my dear Ladies or—the Word Mad-o-na—So I say! I am not mad—Howsumever When that aged Tamer Kewthon sold a Certain Camel Called Peter to the Overseer of the Babel Skyworks,<sup>3</sup> he thus spake, adjusting his Cravat round the

18. The address on this letter is in the handwriting of Benjamin Bailey. When Keats wrote it to the sisters of his friend Reynolds, he was staying at Oxford with Bailey, who was supposed to have a tenderness for Mariane, and the young ladies were staying at Littlehampton.

<sup>1</sup> Milton, 'Il Penseroso', line 174.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. M. Willson Disher in his 'Greatest Show on Earth', p. 36, says: 'Ghosts were rare in circuses, but one to fit this reference walked at the Royal Circus in "Halloween; or, The Castle of Athlin and Dunbayne", a New Grand Scotch Spectacle by J. C. Cross, the description of which is in "Circusiana", published in 1809.'

<sup>3</sup> This is a *jeu d'esprit* on a plate entitled 'The Building of Babel' in Southwell's 'Universal Family Bible' (1773), a copy of which Keats owned. See 'Moneta's Temple', by Dr. Livingston Lowes, in 'P.M.L.A.', Dec. 1936, p. 1109.



tip of his Chin—My dear Ten Storyupinair—this here Beast though I say it as shouldn't say't not only has the Power of subsisting 40 day(s) and 40 Nights without fire and Candle but he can sing—here I have in my Pocket a Certificate from Signor Nicolini of the King's Theatre a Certificate to this effect \*\*\*\*\* I have had dinner since I left that effect upon you and feel to(o) heavy in mentibus to display all the Profundity of the Polyglon—so you had better each of you take a glass of cherry branday and drink to the health of Archimedes who was of so benign a disposition that he never would (leave) Syracuse in his Life so kept himself out of all Knight errantry—this I know to be a fact for it is written in the 45 Book of Winkine's treatise on Garden rollers that he trod on a fishwoman's toe in Liverpool and never begged her pardon. Now the long and the short is this—that is by comparison—for a long day may be a short year—a long Pole<sup>1</sup> may be a very stupid fellow as a Man—But let us refresh ourself from this dept(h) of thinking and turn to some innocent Jocularly—the Bow cannot always be bent—nor the gun always loaded if you ever let it off and the Life of Man is like a great Mountain—his breath is like a Shrewsbury Cake<sup>2</sup>—he comes into the world like a Shoeblack and goes out of it like a Cob(b)ler—he eats like a Chimneysweeper drinks like a Gingerbread Baker and breath(e)s like Achilles—So it being that we are such sublunary creatures let us endeavour to correct all our bad Spelling—all our most delightful Abominations and let us wish health to Marian and Jane<sup>3</sup> whoever they be and wherever—

Your's truly  
John Keats—

19. To FANNY KEATS. *Wednesday 10 Sept. 1817.*

Address: Miss Keats | Miss Kaley's<sup>4</sup> School | Walthamstow | Essex—

Postmark: OXFORD 12 SE 1817.

Oxford Sept<sup>r</sup> 10<sup>th</sup>

My dear Fanny,

Let us now begin a regular question and answer—a

<sup>1</sup> Probably an allusion to William Pole Tylney Long-Wellesley (1788–1857) commemorated in the 'Rejected Addresses' (1812):

'Long may Long Tylney Wellesley Long Pole live.'

<sup>2</sup> The Reynolds family had migrated to London from Shrewsbury.

<sup>3</sup> See Biographical Memoranda.

<sup>4</sup> Correctly spelt Caley in the address of Letter 97.

little pro and con; letting it interfere as a pleasant method of my coming at your favorite little wants and enjoyments, that I may meet them in a way befitting a brother.

We have been so little together since you have been able to reflect on things that I know not whether you prefer the History of King Pepin to Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress—or Cinderella and her glass slipper to Moor's Almanack.<sup>1</sup> However in a few Letters I hope I shall be able to come at that and adapt my scribblings to your Pleasure. You must tell me about all you read if it be only six Pages in a Week—and this transmitted to me every now and then will procure you full sheets of Writing from me pretty frequently—This this I feel as a necessity: for we ought to become intimately acquainted, in order that I may not only, as you grow up love you as my only Sister, but confide in you as my dearest friend. When I saw you last I told you of my intention of going to Oxford and 'tis now a Week since I disembark'd from his Whipship's Coach the Defiance in this place. I am living in Magdalen Hall on a visit to a young Man with whom I have not been long acquainted, but whom I like very much—we lead very industrious lives he in general<sup>s</sup> Studies and I in proceeding at a pretty good rate with a Poem which I hope you will see early in the next year.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps you might like to know what I am writing about. I will tell you.

Many Years ago there was a young handsome Shepherd who fed his flocks on a Mountain's Side called Latmus—he was a very contemplative sort of a Person and lived solit(a)ry among the trees and Plains little thinking—that such a beautiful Creature as the Moon was growing mad in Love with him—However so it was; and when he was asleep on the Grass, she used to come down from heaven and

<sup>1</sup> 'Old Moore's Almanack' first issued in 1697 and existing to this day with a certified annual sale approximating two and a half million copies.

<sup>2</sup> Of Keats's habits while staying at Oxford, Bailey gave the following account, quoted by Lord Houghton:—"He wrote and I read—sometimes at the same table, sometimes at separate desks—from breakfast till two or three o'clock. He sat down to his task, which was about fifty lines a day, with his paper before him, and wrote with as much regularity and apparently with as much ease as he wrote his letters. Indeed, he quite acted up to the principle he lays down, "that if Poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves of a tree, it had better not come at all". Sometimes he fell short of his allotted task, but not often, and he would make it up another day. But he never forced himself. When he had finished his writing for the day, he usually read it over to me, and then read or wrote letters till we went out for a walk."

admire him excessively from a long time; and at last could not refrain from car(r)ying him away in her arms to the top of that high Mountain Latmus while he was a dreaming—but I dare ~~yo~~ say <you><sup>1</sup> have read this and all the other beautiful Tales which have come down from the ancient times of that beautiful Greece. If you have not let me know and I will tell you more at large of others quite as delightful.

This Oxford I have no doubt is the finest City in the world—it is full of old Gothic buildings—Spires—towers—Quadrangles—Cloisters Groves & <c.> and is surrounded with more clear streams than ever I saw together. I take a Walk by the Side of one of them every Evening and thank God, we have not had a drop of rain these many days. I had a long and interesting Letter from George, cross lines by a short one from Tom yesterday dated Paris. They both send their loves to you. Like most Englishmen they feel a mighty preference for every thing English—the french Meadows the trees the People the Towns the Churches, the Books the every thing—although they may be in themselves good: yet when put in comparison with our green Island they all vanish like Swallows in October. They have seen Cathedrals Manuscripts, Fountains, Pictures, Tragedy Comedy,—with other things you may by chance meet with in this Country such a <s> Washerwomen, Lamp-lighters, Turnpikemen Fish Kettles, Dancing Masters, Kettle drums, Sentry Boxes, Rocking Horses &c. and, now they have taken them over a set of boxing gloves. I have written to George and requested him, as you wish I should, to write to you. I have been writing very hard lately even till an utter incapacity came on, and I feel it now about my head: so you must not mind a little out of the way sayings—though bye the bye where my brain as clear as a bell I think I should have a little propensity thereto. I shall stop here till I have finished the 3<sup>rd</sup> Book of my Story; which I hope will be accomplish'd in at most three Weeks from to day—about which time you shall see me. How do you like Miss Taylor's essays in Rhyme<sup>2</sup>—I

<sup>1</sup> Keats wrote 'dare yo say have', struck out 'yo', and forgot to write 'you' before 'have'.

<sup>2</sup> 'Original Poems for Infant Minds' (1807) and 'Essays in Rhyme on Morals and Manners' (1816), both produced conjointly by Jane and Ann Taylor. 'Essays in Rhyme', second edition, inscribed in Keats's hand 'John Keats to His Dear Sister', was found by Mrs. Franklin P. Adams, of New York, on a Madrid bookstall in May 1924.

just look'd into the Book and it appeared to me suitable to you—especially since I remember your liking for those pleasant little things the Original Poems—the essays are the more mature production of the same hand. While I was speaking about french it occur(r)ed to me to speak a few Words on their Language—it is perhaps the poorest one ever spoken since the jabbering in the Tower of Babel, and when you come to know that the real use and greatness of a Tongue is to be referred to its Literature—you will be astonished to find how very inferior it is to our native Speech—I wish the Italian would supersede french in every School throughout the Country for that is full of real Poetry and Romance of a kind more fitted for the Pleasure of Ladies than perhaps our own—It seems that the only end to be gained in acquiring french is the immense accomplishment of speaking it—it is none at all—a most lamentable mistake indeed. Italian indeed would sound most musically from Lips which had b(e)gan to pronounce it as early as french is cramne'd down our Mouths, as if we were young Jackdaws at the mercy of an overfeeding Schoolboy.

Now Fanny you must write soon—and write all you think about, never mind what—only let me have a good deal of your writing—You need not do it all at once—be two or three or four day(s) about it, and let it be a diary of your little Life. You will preserve all my Letters and I will secure yours—and thus in the course of time we shall each of us have a good Bundle—which, hereafter, when things may have strangely altered and god knows what happened, we may read over together and look with pleasure on times past—that now are to come. Give my Respects to the Ladies—and so my dear Fanny I am ever

Your most affectionate Brother  
John

If you direct—Post Office Oxford—your Letter will be brought to me—.

20. To JANE REYNOLDS.<sup>1</sup> (Sept. 1817.)

*No address or postmark.*

My dear Jane,

You must not expect that your Porcupine quill is to be shot at me with impunity—without you mean to question

<sup>1</sup> This letter is written on an undated portion of a letter in Benjamin Bailey's hand-writing. The picture of Jeremy Taylor to which Keats refers is probably the portrait by Lombard published in folio.

the existance of the Pyramids or rout Sir Isa(a)c Newton out of his Coffin. If I did not think you had a kind of preferenc(e) yourself for Juliet I would not say a word more about it—but as I know people love to be reminded of those they most love—'t is with me a certain thing that you are merely fishing for a little proing and conning thereon—As for you(r) accusation(s) I perhaps may answer them like Haydon in a Postscript—. If you go on at this rate I shall always have you in my imagination side by side with Bailey's Picture of Jeremy Taylor<sup>1</sup> who always looks as if he were going to hit me a rap with a Book he hold(s) in a very threatning position My head is always in imminent danger—However with the armour of words and the Sword of Syllables<sup>2</sup> I hope to attack you in a very short time more at length—

My love to Marianne

Your's sincerely

John Keats.

21. To JANE and MARIANE REYNOLDS. Sunday 14 Sept. 1817.

Address: Miss Reynolds— | Mr<sup>s</sup> Earle | Little Hampton.

Postmark: OXFORD 15 SE 1817.

Oxford Sunday Evening

My dear Jane,

You are such a literal translator that I shall some day amuse myself with looking over some foreign sentences and imagining how you would render them into english. This is an age for typical curiosities and I would advise you, as a good speculation, to study Hebrew and astonish the world with a figurative version in our native tongue. 'The Mountains skipping like Rams and the little Hills like Lambs'<sup>3</sup> you will leave as far behind as the Hare did the Tortoise. It must be so or you would never have thought that I really meant you would like to pro and con about those Honeycombs<sup>4</sup>—no, I had no such idea, or if I had 'twould be only to tease you a little for Love. So now let me put down in black and white briefly my sentiment

<sup>1</sup> See footnote on p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ephesians, vi. 13, 17, and second sentence of Letter 16.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm cxiv. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly an allusion to Will Honeycomb, an authority on fashions of the day and a member of the imaginary club from which 'The Spectator' issued. See also Letter 22, p. 44. 'The Spectator', in 7 vols., appears in Charles Brown's list of Keats's books.

thereon. Imprimis—I sincerely believe that Imogen is the finest Creature; and that I should have been disappointed at hearing you prefer Juliet. Item Yet I feel such a yearning towards Juliet and that I would rather follow her into Pandemonium than Imogen into Paradize—heartily wishing myself a Romeo to be worthy of her and to he(a)r the Devils quote the old Proverb—‘Birds of a feather flock together’—Amen. Now let us turn to the Sea Shore. Believe me, my dear Jane it is a great Happiness to me that you are in this finest part of the year, winning a little enjoyment from the hard World—in truth the great Elements we know of are no mean Comforters—the open Sky sits upon our senses like a Sapphire Crown—the Air is our Robe of State—the Earth is our throne and the Sea a mighty Minstrell playing before it—able like David’s Harp to charm the evil Spirit from such Creatures as I am—able like Ariel’s to make such a one as you forget almost the tempest-cares of Life. I have found in the Ocean’s Musick—varying (though selfsame) more than the passion of Timotheus,<sup>1</sup> an enjoyment not to be put into words and “though inland far I be”<sup>2</sup> I now hear the voice most audibly while pleasing myself in the Idea of your Sensations. Marianne is getting well apace and if you have a few trees and a little Harvesting about you, I’ll snap my fingers in Lucifer’s eye. I hope you bathe too—if you do not I earnestly recommend it—bathe thrice a Week and let us have no more sitting up next Winter. Which is the best of Shakspeare’s Plays? I mean in what mood and with what accompaniment do you like the Sea best? It is very fine in the morning when the Sun

“opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams

Turns into yellow gold his salt Sea Streams”<sup>3</sup>

and superb when

“The sun from meridian height

Illumines the depth of the sea,

and the fishes beginning to sweat

Cry damn it how hot we shall be”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Dryden’s ‘Alexander’s Feast’.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Wordsworth, ‘Ode on Immortality’, l. 162.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Midsummer-Night’s Dream’, III. ii. 392–3.

<sup>4</sup> ll. 1–2 by William Lort Mansel (1753–1820), well-known wit, sometime Bishop of Bristol; ll. 3–4 probably by Thomas James Mathias (1754?–1835), satirist and Italian scholar. Both men took M.A. degree at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1777.

and gorgeous when the fair planet hastens—"to his home within the western foam" but don't you think there is something extremely fine after sunset, when there are a few white Clouds about and a few stars blinking—when the the waters are ebbing and the Horison a Mystery? This state of things has been so fulfilling to me that I am anxious to hear whether it is a favorite with you—so when you and Marriann club your Letter to me put in a word or t(w)o about it. I am glad that you will spend a little time with the Dilk(e)s—tell Dilk(e) that it would be perhaps as well if he left a Pheasant or Partri(d)ge alive here and there to keep up a supply of Game for next season—tell him to rein<sup>1</sup> in if possible all the Nimrod of his disposition, he being a mighty hunter befor(e) the Lord—of the Manor. Tell him to shoot far<sup>2</sup> and not have at the poor devils in a furrow—when they are flying he may fire and nobody will be the wiser. Give my sincerest Respects to M<sup>rs</sup> Dilk(e) saying that I have not forgiven myself for not having got her the little Box of Medicine I promised for her after dinner flushings—and that had I remained at Hampstead I would have made precious havoc with her house and furniture—drawn a great harrow over her garden—poisoned Boxer—eaten her Cloathes pegs,—fried her Cabbages fricaceed (how is it spelt?) her radishes—ragouted her Onions—belaboured her beat root—outstripped her Scarlet Runners—parlezvou'd with her french Beans—devoured her Mignon or Mignonette—metamorphosed her Bell handles—splinterd her looking glasses—bullock'd at her cups and Saucers—agonized her decanters—put old Philips<sup>3</sup> to pickle in the Brine-tub—disorganized her Piano—dislocated her Candlesticks—emptied her wine bins in a fit of despair—turned out her Maid to Grass and Astonished Brown—whosc Letter to her on these events I would rather see than the original copy of the Book of Genesis. Should you see M<sup>r</sup> W. D.(ilke) remember (me) to him—and to little Robinson Crusoe<sup>4</sup>—and to M<sup>r</sup> Snook—

Poor Bailey scar(c)ely ever well has gone to bed very so so, and pleased that I am writing to you. To your

<sup>1</sup> He wrote *rein* and altered it to *rein*.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly Keats meant to write 'fair'.

<sup>3</sup> The gardener.

<sup>4</sup> I do not know to whom this name was applied.

Brother John (whom henceforth I shall consider as mine) and to you my dear friends Marriann and Jane I shall ever feel grateful for having made known to me so real a fellow as Bailey. He delights me in the Selfish and (please God) the disinterested part of my disposition. If the old Poets have any pleasure in looking down at the Enjoyers of their Works, their eyes must bend with double satisfaction upon him—I sit as at a feast when he is over them and pray that if after my death any of my Labours should be worth saving, they may have as “honest a Chronicler”<sup>1</sup> as Bailey. Out of this his Enthusiasm in his own pursuit and for all good things is of an exalted kind—worthy a more healthful frame and an untorn Spirit. He must have happy years to come—he shall not die by God<sup>2</sup>—A Letter from John the other day was a chief Happiness to me. I made a little mistake when just now I talked of being far inland: how can that be when Endymion and I are at the bottom of the Sea?<sup>3</sup> Whence I hope to bring him in safety before you leave the Sea Side and if I can so contrive it you shall be greeted by him on the Sands and he shall tell you all his adventures: which having finished he shall thus proceed. “My dear Ladies, favorites of my gentle Mistress, how ever my friend Keats may have teased and vexed you believe me he loves you not the less—for instance I am deep in his favor and yet he has been hawling me through the Earth and Sea with unrelenting Perseverance. I know for all this that he is mightily fond of me, by his contriving me all sorts of pleasures—nor is this the least fair Ladies—this one of meeting you on desert Shore and greeting you in his Name. He sends you moreover this little scroll”—

My dear Girls, (Remberances to little Britain)

I send you per favor of Endymion the assurance of my esteem of you and my utmost wishes for you (r) Health and Pleasure—being ever—

Your affectionate Brother—

John Keats—

George and Tom are well—

<sup>1</sup> ‘Henry VIII’, iv. ii. 72.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Tristram Shandy’, vol. vi, chap. viii.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Endymion’, II. 1023—and Book III.



22. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. Sunday (21 Sept. 1817).

Address: Mr J. H. Reynolds. | Little Britain | Christs Hospital | London.

Postmark: not recorded.

Oxford Sunday Morn

My dear Reynolds,

So you are determined to be my mortal foe—draw a Sword at me, and I will forgive—Put a Bullet in my Brain, and I will shake it out as a dew-drop from the Lion's Mane;<sup>1</sup>—put me on a Gridiron and I will fry with great complacency—but, oh horror! to come upon me in the shape of a Dun! Send me bills! As I say to my Taylor send me Bills and I'll never employ you more—However, needs must when the devil drives: and for fear of “before and behind Mr Honeycomb”<sup>2</sup> I'll proceed. I have not time to elucidate the forms and shapes of the grass and trees; for, rot it! I forgot to bring my mathematical case with me; which unfortunately contained my triangular Prism so that the hues of the grass cannot be dissected for you—

For these last five or six days, we have had regularly a Boat on the Isis, and explored all the streams about, which are more in number than your eye lashes. We sometimes skim into a Bed of rushes, and there become naturalized riverfolks,—there is one particularly nice nest which we have christened “Reynolds's Cove,” in which we have read Wordsworth and talked as may be. I think I see you and Hunt meeting in the Pit.—What a very pleasant fellow he is, if he would give up the sovereignty of a Room pro bono—What Evenings we might pass with him, could we have him from Mr<sup>s</sup> H—Failings I am always rather rejoiced to find in a Man than sorry for; they bring us to a Level—He has them,—but then his makes-up are very good. He agrees with the Northe(r)n Poet in this, “He is not one of those who much delight to season their fireside with personal talk”—I must confess however having a little itch that way, and at this present I have a few neighbourly remarks to make—The world, and especially our England, has, within the last thirty years been vexed and teased by a set of Devils, whom I detest so much that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ‘Troilus and Cressida’, III. iii. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Honeywood in Goldsmith's ‘Good-Natur'd Man’, Act III. Cf. Letter 21 and n. 4, p. 40.

I almost hunger after an acherontic promotion to a Torturer, purposely for their accom(m)odation. These Devils are a set of Women, who having taken a snack or Luncheon of Literary scraps, set themselves up for towers of Babel in Languages Sapphos in Poetry—Euclids in Geometry—and everything in nothing. Among such the name of Montague<sup>1</sup> has been preeminent. The thing has made a very uncomfortable impression on me.—I had longed for some real feminine Modesty in these things, and was therefore gladdened in the extreme on opening the other day one of Bayley's Books—a Book of Poetry written by one beautiful M<sup>rs</sup> Philips, a friend of Jeremy Taylor's, and called "the matchless Orinda"<sup>2</sup>—You must have heard of her, and most likely read her Poetry—I wish you have not, that I may have the pleasure of treating you with a few stanzas—I do it at a venture.—You will not regret reading them once more. The following to her friend M<sup>rs</sup> M. A.<sup>3</sup> at parting you will judge of.

## I

I have examined and do find,  
Of all that favour me  
There's none I grieve to leave behind  
But only, only thee  
To part with thee I needs must die  
Could parting sep'rate thee and I.

## 2

But neither chance nor Compliment  
Did *element* our Love;  
'Twas sacred sympathy was lent  
Us from the Quire above.  
That friendship fortune did create,  
Still fears a wound from time or fate.

## 3

Our chang'd and mingled souls are grown  
To such acquaintance now,  
That if each would resume her own,  
Alas! we know not how.  
We have each other so engrost,  
That each is in the union lost

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, née Robinson (1720–1800), one of the Blue Stocking leaders.

<sup>2</sup> Katherine Philips (1631–64).

<sup>3</sup> Mary Awbrey (Mrs. Montague).

4

And thus we can no absence know  
 Nor shall we be confin'd;  
 Our active souls will daily go  
 To learn each others mind.  
 Nay, should we never meet to sense,  
 Our souls would hold intelligence.

5

Inspired with a flame divine  
 I scorn to court a stay;  
 For from that noble soul of thine  
 I ne'er can be away.  
 But I shall weep when thou dost grieve  
 Nor can I die whilst thou dost live

6

By my own temper I shall guess  
 At thy felicity,  
 And only like my happiness  
 Because it pleaseth thee.  
 Our hearts at any time will tell  
 If thou, or I be sick or well.

7

All honour sure I must pretend,  
 All that is good or great;  
 She that would be Rosania's friend,  
 Must be at least compleat,  
 If I have any Bravery,  
 'Tis cause I have so much of thee.

A compleat  
 friend — this  
 Line sounded  
 very oddly to  
 me at first.

8

Thy Leiger Soul in me shall lie,  
 And all thy thoughts reveal;  
 Then back again with mine shall flie  
 And thence to me shall steal.  
 Thus still to one another tend;  
 Such is the sacred name of friend.

9

Thus our twin Souls in one shall grow,  
 And teach the world new Love,  
 Redeem the age and sex, and show  
 A Flame Fate dares not move:  
 And courting death to be our friend,  
 Our Lives together too shall end

## 10

A Dew shall dwell upon our Tomb  
 Of such a Quality  
 That fighting Armies thither come  
 Shall reconciled be.  
 We'll ask no Epitaph, but say  
 Orinda and Rosannia

In other of her Poems there is a most delicate fancy of the Fletcher Kind—which we will con over together: So Haydon is in Town—I had a letter from him yesterday—We will contrive as the Winter comes on—but that <is> neither here nor there. Have you heard from Rice? Has Martin<sup>1</sup> met with the Cumberland Beggar<sup>2</sup> or been wondering at the old Leech gatherer?<sup>2</sup> Has he a turn for fossils? that is, is he capable of sinking up to his Middle in a Morass? I have longed to peep in and see him at supper after some tolerable fatigue. How is Hazlitt? We were reading his Table<sup>3</sup> last night. I know he thinks himself not estimated by ten People in the World—I wish he knew he is—I am getting on famous with my third Book—have written 800 lines thereof, and hope to finish it next Week—Bailey likes what I have done very much<sup>4</sup>—Believe me, my dear Reynolds, one of my chief layings-up is the pleasure I shall have in showing it to you, I may now say, in a few days—I have heard twice from my Brothers; they are going on very well, and send their Remembrances to you. We expected to have had notices from little Hampton this morning—we must wait till Tuesday. I am glad of their Days with the Dilk(e)s. You are I know very much teased in that precious London,

<sup>1</sup> The gentleman referred to was John Martin of the firm of Rodwell and Martin—publishers and booksellers then at 46 New Bond Street. Martin was friendly with Reynolds, Rice, and Bailey, as well as with Keats, and was a constant visitor at Little Britain, where he was well thought of. Though something of an epicure and not considered an intellectual man, he relished the brilliant society of the circle of friends as well as the material good things, his weakness for which was a frequent topic of friendly chaff. Born on the 16th of September 1791, he retired early from business (1826), did much bibliographical work, became librarian at Woburn Abbey (1836), and F.S.A., and died on the 30th of December 1855.—H.B.F.

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth's, of course.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Round Table.'

<sup>4</sup> Bailey's encouragement no doubt speeded the poet in the production of 'Endymion'. The reference to 'little Hampton' is of course to Reynolds's sisters Jane and Mariane. C. W. Dilke records that the young ladies 'came over and stayed a few days with us at my sister's <Mrs. Snook's> at Bedhampton'.—H.B.F.

and want all the rest possible; so shall be content with as brief a scrall—a Word or two, till there comes a pat hour—

Send us a few of your Stanzas to read in “Reynolds’s cove.” Give my Love and respects to your Mother and remember me kindly to all at home.

Yours faithfully

John Keats

I have left the doublings for Bailey<sup>1</sup> who is going to say that he will write to you to morrow

23. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. (September 1817.)

. . . . . Wordsworth sometimes, though in a fine way, gives us sentences in the style of school exercises—For instance,

The lake doth glitter  
Small birds twitter &c.<sup>2</sup>

Now, I think this is an excellent method of giving a very clear description of an interesting place such as Oxford is—

The Gothic looks solemn—  
The plain Doric column  
Supports an old Bishop & Crosier;  
The mouldering arch,  
Shaded o’er by a larch,  
Lives next door to Wilson the Hosier

Vicè—that is, by turns—  
O’er pale visages mourns  
The black tassell trencher or common hat:  
The Chauntry boy sings,  
The Steeple-bell rings,  
And as for the Chancellor—*dominat*.

<sup>1</sup> Bailey wrote, *inter alia*: ‘I have not heard from Little Hampton since their return from M<sup>rs</sup> Snookes. Jane owes Keats a Letter . . . P.S. There is one passage of Keats’s 3<sup>d</sup> Book which beats all he has written. It is on *death* (ll. 766–806). He wrote it last night. Tell me if you agree with me when you hear it.’

<sup>2</sup> The particular poem alluded to is that ‘Written in March, while resting on the Bridge at the Foot of Brother’s Water’, published in 1807.

There are plenty of trees,  
 And plenty of ease,  
 And plenty of fat deer for Parsons;  
 And when it is venison  
 Short is the benison,—  
 Then each on a leg or thigh fastens.

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. *Wednesday*  
*17 Sept. 1817.*

My dear Keats,

I am delighted to hear you *<are>* getting on with your Poem, success to it and to you with all my heart & soul and liver—will you oblige me by going to Magdalen College, and ask for the Porter—and will you enquire of him about a Young Man who was copying when I was at Oxford the Altar piece there by Moralez.—I am anxious to know about that Young Man, the copy promised something—will you if you can see the Young Man, and ascertain what his wishes in Art *are*—if he has *ambition*, if he seems to possess power—if he wishes to *be great*—all of which you can soon see—In these cases should any friend be disposed to assist him up to London & to support him for a Year I'll train him in the Art, with no other remuneration but the pleasure of seeing him advance—I'll put him in the right way, and do every thing to advance him—read this part of the *letter to the Porter*—and do oblige me by exerting your Yourself—perhaps Mr. Bailey will also feel an interest—give my kind remembrance to him.

Sp. 17. 1817—

Yours ever, Dear Keats—

B. R. Haydon

41 as usual—

24. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Sunday 28*  
*Sept. 1817.*

Address: B. R. Haydon | 41 Great Marlborough Street | London

Postmark: OXFORD 28 SE 1817.

Oxford Sept<sup>r</sup> 28<sup>th</sup>

My dear Haydon,

I read your last to the young Man whose Name is Cripps.<sup>1</sup> He seemed more than ever anxious to avail himself of your offer. I think I told you we asked him to ascertain his Means. He does not possess the Philosophers stone—nor Fortunatus' purse, nor Gyges' ring—but at Bailey's suggestion, whom I assure you is a very capital fellow, we

<sup>1</sup> Charles Cripps, baptized in Iffley Church on the 27th of November, 1796: lived for some time at Iffley where his third child was born in 1831: described in the Church Registers as an Artist. The altar-piece in Magdalen Chapel is by Ribalta and the copy made by Cripps now hangs in St. Denys' Church, Northmoor.

have stummed<sup>1</sup> up a kind of contrivance whereby he will be enabled to do himself the benifits you will lay in his Path. I have a great Idea that he will be a tolerable neat brush. 'Tis perhaps the finest thing that will befall him this many a year: for he is just of an age to get grounded in bad habits from which you will pluck him. He brought a Copy of Mary Queen of Scotts—it appears to me that he has coppied the bad style of the painting as well as couloured the eyebal(1)s yellow like the original. He has also the fault that you pointed out to me in Hazlitt—on the constringing and diffusing of substance.<sup>2</sup> However I really believe that he will take fire at the sight of your Picture—and set about things. If he can get ready in time to return to Town with me which will be in a few days—I will bring (him) to you. You will be glad to hear that within these last three weeks I have written 1000 lines—which are the third Book of my Poem. My Ideas with respect to it I assure you are very low—and I would write the subject thoroughly again—but I am tired of it and think the time would be better spent in writing a new Romance which I have in my eye for next Summer—Rome was not built in a Day—and all the good I expect from my employment this summer is the fruit of Experience which I hope to gather in my next Poem.<sup>3</sup> Bailey's kindest wishes and my vow of being

Yours eternally.

John Keats—

25. To BENJAMIN BAILEY. *Wednesday 8 Oct. 1817.*

*Address:* Mr. B. Bailey | Magdalen Hall. | Oxford.

*Postmark:* 8 OCT 1817.

Hamps(t)ead Oct<sup>r</sup> Wednesday.

My dear Bailey,

After a tolerable journey, I went from Coach to Coach to as far as Hampstead where I found my Brothers—the next Morning finding myself tolerably well I went to Lambs Conduit Street and delivered your Parcel—Jane and Marianne were greatly improved Marianne especially

<sup>1</sup> This word is certainly *stummed* in the original letter; and I think *stummed*, in the sense of *strengthened*, is more probably what Keats meant to write than either *strummed* or *stumped*.

<sup>2</sup> Hazlitt as a painter is best known by his portrait of Lamb in the National Portrait Gallery.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the preface to 'Endymion'.

she has no unhealthy plumpness in the face—but she comes me healthy and angular to the Chin—I did not see John—I was extrem(e)ly sorry to hear that poor Rice, after having had capital Health during his tour, was very ill. I dare say you have heard from him. From No 19 I went to Hunt's and Haydon's who live now neighbours. Shelley was there. I know nothing about anything in this part of the world—every Body seems at Loggerheads. There's Hunt infatuated—there's Haydon's Picture in statu quo. There's Hunt walks up and down his painting room criticising every head most unmercifully. There's Horace Smith tired of Hunt.<sup>1</sup> The web of our Life is of mingled Yarn."<sup>2</sup> Haydon having removed entirely from Marlborough Street Crips must direct his Letter to Lisson Grove North—Paddington. Yesterday Morning while I was at Brown's in came Reynolds—he was pretty bobbish we had a pleasant day—but he would walk home at night that cursed cold distance. M<sup>rs</sup> Bentley's children<sup>3</sup> are making a horrid row—whereby I regret I cannot be transported to your Room to write to you. I am quite disgusted with literary Men—and will never know another except Wordsworth—no not even Byron. Here is an instance of the friendships of such. Haydon and Hunt have known each other many years—now they live pour ainsi dire jealous Neighbours. Haydon says to me Keats dont show your Lines to Hunt on any account or he will have done half for you—so it appears Hunt wishes it to be thought. When he met Reynolds in the Theatre John told him that I was getting on to the completion of 4000 Lines. Ah! says Hunt, had it not been for me they would have been 7000! If he will say this to Reynolds what would he to other People? Haydon received a Letter a little while back on this subject from some Lady—which contains a caution to me through him on this subject—Now is not all this a most paultry thing to think about? You may see the whole of the case by the following extract from a Letter I wrote to George in the Spring "As to what you "say about my being a Poet, I can return no answer but

<sup>1</sup> At Hunt's cottage in 1816 Horace Smith 'was introduced to <Shelley and> another young poet of no common talent—'Keats'.—'James and Horace Smith', by Arthur H. Beavan: London, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'All's Well that Ends Well', iv. iii. 83.

<sup>3</sup> The children of Bentley the postman, at whose house in Well Walk the Keats brothers were lodging, were something of a trial to the poet.



"by saying that the high Idea I have of poetical fame  
 "makes me think I see it towering to high above me. At  
 "any rate I have no right to talk until Endymion is  
 "finished—it will be a test, a trial of my Powers of  
 "Imagination and chiefly of my invention which is a rare  
 "thing indeed—by which I must make 4000 Lines of one  
 "bare circumstance and fill them with Poetry; and when  
 "I consider that this is a great task, and that when done  
 "it will take me but a dozen paces towards the Temple  
 "of Fame—it makes me say—God forbid that I should be  
 "without such a task! I have heard Hunt say and (I) may  
 "be asked—why endeavour after a long Poem? To which  
 "I should answer—Do not the Lovers of Poetry like to  
 "have a little Region to wander in where they may pick  
 "and choose, and in which the images are so numerous  
 "that many are forgotten and found new in a second  
 "Reading: which may be food for a Week's stroll in the  
 "Summer? Do not they like this better than what they  
 "can read through before Mr<sup>s</sup> Williams comes down  
 "stairs? a Morning work at most. Besides a long Poem is  
 "a test of Invention which I take to be the Polar Star of  
 "Poetry, as Fancy is the Sails, and Imagination the  
 "Rudder. Did our great Poets ever write short Pieces?  
 "I mean in the shape of Tales—This same invention  
 "seems indeed of late Years to have been forgotten as a  
 "Poetical excellence. But enough of this, I put on no  
 "Laurels till I shall have finished Endymion, and I hope  
 "Apollo is (not) angered<sup>1</sup> at my having made a Mockery  
 "at him at Hunt's"<sup>2</sup>

You see Bailey how independant my writing has been—  
 Hunts dissuasion was of no avail—I refused to visit Shelley,  
 that I might have my own unfetterd Scope—and after all  
 I shall have the Reputation of Hunt's elevé. His correc-  
 tions and amputations will by the knowing ones be traced  
 in the Poem. This is to be sure the vexation of a day—nor  
 would I say so many Words about it to any but those  
 whom I know to have my welfare and Reputation at  
 Heart—Haydon promised to give directions for those

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the 'Hymn to Apollo' (God of the golden bow).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the two sonnets on receiving a laurel crown from Leigh Hunt ('Minutes are flying swiftly', 'What is there in the universal Earth'). Bailey endorsed this letter: 'I think this letter will be a groundwork for a defence of poor Keats's having had Hunt for a Patron which is so shamelessly insisted on by the writers of Blackwds.'

Casts and you may expect to see them soon—with as many Letters. You will soon hear the dinning of Bells—never mind you and Gleg<sup>1</sup> will defy the foul fiend.<sup>2</sup> But do not sacrifice your health to Books do take it kindly and not so voraciously. I am certain if you are your own Physician your Stomach will resume its proper Strength and then what great Benefits will follow. My Sister wrote a Letter to me which I think must be at y<sup>r</sup> post office—Ax Will to see. My Brothers kindest remembrances to you—we are going to dine at Brown's where I have some hopes of meeting Reynolds. The little Mercury I have taken has corrected the Poison and improved my Health—though I feel from my employment that I shall never be again secure in Robustness—would that you were as well as

your sincere friend & brother  
John Keats—

The Dilk(e)s are expected to day.

26. To BENJAMIN BAILEY. (October 1817.)<sup>3</sup>

Address: Mr B. Bailey | Magdalen Hall | Oxford.

Postmark: illegible.

My dear Bailey,

So you have got a Curacy! good but I suppose you will be obliged to stop among your Oxford favorites during term time—never mind. When do you p(r)each your first Sermon tell me for I shall propose to the two Rs<sup>4</sup> to hear it, so dont look into any of the old corner oaken pews, for fear of being put out by us—Poor Johnny Martin<sup>5</sup> can't be there He is ill I suspect—but that's neither here nor there—all I can say I wish him as well through it as I am like to be. For this fortnight I have been confined at Hampstead—Saturday evening was my first day in town—when I went to Rices as we intend to do every Saturday till we know not when—Rice had some business at Highgate yesterday—so he came over to me, and detained me for

<sup>1</sup> George Robert Gleig (1796–1888), author of 'The Subaltern', and many other well-known works, and sometime Chaplain General of the Forces. He took his degree in 1818 and orders in 1820.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'King Lear', III. iv. 98–9.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote to letter 27, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Probably John Hamilton Reynolds and James Rice, possibly Jane and Mariane Reynolds.

<sup>5</sup> John Martin, see p. 47, note 1.

the first time of I hope 24860 times. We hit upon an old Gent we had known some few years ago and had a veray pleausante daye,. In this World there is no quiet nothing but teasing and snubbing and vexation—my brother Tom look'd very unwell yesterday and I am for shipping him off to Lisbon—perhaps I ship there with him. I have not seen M<sup>rs</sup> Reynolds since I left you wherefore my conscience smites me—I think of seeing her tomorrow have you any Message? I hope Gleg came soon after I left.

I dont suppose I've w(r)itten as many Lines as you have read Volumes or at least Chapters since I saw you. However, I am in a fair way now to come to a conclusion in at least three Weeks when I assure you I shall be glad to dismount for a Month or two although I'll keep as tight a reign as possible till then nor suffer myself to sleep. I will copy for you the opening of the 4 Book—in which you will see from the Manner I had not an opportunity of mentioning any Poets, for fear of spoiling the effect of the passage by particularising them!

Muse of my Native Land! Loftiest Muse!  
 O First born of the Mountains, by the hues  
 Of Heaven on the spiritual air begot—  
 Long didst thou sit alone in northern grot  
 While yet our England was a wolfish den;  
 Before our forests heard the talk of Men;  
 Before the first of Druids was a child.—  
 Long didst thou sit amid our regions wild  
 Wrapt in a deep, prophetic Solitude.  
 There came a hebrew voice of solemn Mood  
 Yet wast thou patient: then sang forth the Nine,  
 Apollo's Garland; yet didst thou divine  
 Such homebred Glory, that they cry'd in vain  
 "Come hither Sister of the Island." Plain  
 Spake fair Ausonia, and once more she spake  
 A higher Summons—still didst thou betake  
 Thee to thyself and to thy darling hopes. O thou has(t)  
 won  
 A full accomplishment—the thing is done,  
 Which undone these our latter days had risen  
 On barren Souls. O Muse thou knowst what prison  
 Of flesh and bone curbs and confines and frets  
 Our Spirits Wings: despondency besets

Our Pillows and the fresh tomorrow morn  
 Seems to give forth its light in very scorn  
 Of our dull uninspired snail paced lives.  
 Long have I said "how happy he who shrives  
 To thee"—but then I thought on Poets gone  
 And could not pray—nor can I now—so on  
 I move to the end in Humbleness of Heart. .—

Thus far had I written when I received your last which made me at the sight of the direction caper for despair—but for one thing I am glad that I have been neglectful—and that is, therefrom I have received a proof of your utmost kindness which at this present I feel very much—and I wish I had a heart always open to such sensations—but there is no altering a Man's nature and mine must be radically wrong for it will lie dormant a whole Month.<sup>1</sup> This leads me to suppose that there are no Men thoroughly wicked—so as never to be self spiritualized into a kind of sublime Misery—but alas! 'tis but for an Hour—he is the only Man "who has kept watch on Man's Mortality"<sup>2</sup> who has philanthropy enough to overcome the disposition <to> an indolent enjoyment of intellect—who is brave enough to volunteer for uncomfortable hours. You remember in Hazlit's essay on commonplace people—He says "they read the Edinburgh and Quarterly and think as they do".<sup>3</sup> Now with respect to Wordsworth's Gipseys, I think he is right and yet I think Hazlitt<sup>4</sup> is right and yet I think Wordsworth is rightest. Wordsworth had not been idle he had not been without his task—nor had they Gipseys—they in the visible world had been as picturesque an object as he in the invisible. The Smoke of their fire—their attitudes—their Voices were all in harmony with the Evenings—It is a bold thing to say and I would not say it in print—but it seems to me that if Wordsworth had thought a little deeper at that Moment he would not have written the Poem at all—I should judge it to have been written in one of the most comfortable Moods of his Life—it is a kind of sketchy intellectual Landscape—not a search after Truth—nor is it fair to attack him on such a subject—for it is with the Critic as with the poet had

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letters 31 and 76, pp. 69 and 177.

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth, 'Ode on Immortality', l. 202.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Round Table' (1817), ii. 204, 'On Commonplace Critics'.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. i. 120-2, note to essay 'On Manner'.

Hazlitt thought a little deeper and been in a good temper he would never have spied an imaginary fault there. The Sunday before last I asked Haydon to dine with me—when I thought of settling all Matters with him in regard to Crips and let you know about it—now although I engaged him a Fortnight before—he sent illness as an excuse—he never will come—I have not been well enough to stand the chance of a Wet night, and so have not seen him nor been able to expurgatorize those Masks for you—but I will not speak—your Speakers are never doers—then Reynolds—every time I see him and mention you he puts his hand to his head and looks like a Son of Niobe's—but he'll write soon. Rome you know was not built in a day—I shall be able, by a little perseverance to read your Letters off hand.<sup>1</sup> I am affraid your health will suffer from over study before your examination. I think you might regulate the thing according to your own Pleasure—and I would too. They were talking of your being up at Christmas—will it be before you have passed? There is nothing my dear Bailey I should rejoice at more that *(for than)* to see you comfortable with a little Peona Wife<sup>2</sup>—an affectionate Wife I have a sort of confidence would do you a great happiness May that be one of the many blessings I wish you. Let me be but *(t)he*  $\frac{1}{10}$  of one to you, and I shall think it great. My Brother Georges Kindest wishes to you. My dear Bailey I am

your affectionate friend.

John Keats

I should not like to be Pages in your way when in a tolerable hungry mood you have no Mercy. Your teeth are the Rock Tarpeian<sup>3</sup> down which you capsize Epic Poems like Mad—I would not for 40 Shillings be Coleridge's Lays<sup>4</sup> in your way. I hope you will soon get through this abominable writing in in the Schools—and be able to keep the terms with more comfort in the hope of retiring to a comfortable and quiet home out of the way of all Hopkinse and black beetles. When you are settled I will come and take a peep at your Church—your

<sup>1</sup> Bailey wrote a very bad hand. See Letters 30 (p. 63) and 198 (p. 478).

<sup>2</sup> 'Peona': see 'Endymion', i. 407 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'Coriolanus', iii. i. 212.

<sup>4</sup> Probably the two 'Lay Sermons', 1816, 1817.

house—try whether I shall have grow(n) two lusty for my chair—by the fire side—and take a peep at my cardials Bower—A Question is the best beacon towards a little Speculation. You ask me after my health and spirits—This Question ratifies in my Mind what I have said above—Health and Spirits can only belong unalloyed to the selfish Man—the Man who thinks much of his fellows can never be in Spirits—when I am not suffering for vicious beastliness I am the greater part of the week in spirits. You must forgive although I have only written 300 Lines—they would have been five but I have been obliged to go to town. yesterday I called at Lambs—St<sup>1</sup>—Jane look'd very flush when I first went in but was much better before I left.

27. To JANE REYNOLDS. *Friday 31 Oct. 1817.*

*Address:* Miss Jane Reynolds | 19 Lamb's Conduit Street

*Postmark:* 31 OCT 1817.

My dear Jane,

When I got home the other night there was a letter from Bailey—and so very kind a one after all my indolence that I felt a very repentance—and finished my Letter to him immediately. I hope you are getting well quite fast. I send you a few lines from my fourth Book with the desire of helping away for you five Minutes of the day—

O Sorrow

Why dost borrow

The natural hue of health from verm(e)il Lips?

To give maiden blushes

To the white rose bushes?

Or ist thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

O Sorrow

Why dost borrow

The lustrous passion from a Lover's eye?

To give the glow worm light?

Or on a moonless night

To tinge ~~the~~ on syren shores the salt sea Spry?

<sup>1</sup> Lamb's Conduit Street, where the Reynolds family lived.

27. Keats's mention of a letter from Bailey and the completion of his own unfinished letter obviously refers to the opening sentence of the third paragraph of Letter 26, p. 55, and fixes the date of that letter towards the end of October. The sending of 'our Love' indicates residence at Hampstead of the three brothers.

O Sorrow  
 Why dost borrow  
 The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue?  
 To give 't at Evening pale  
 Unto the Nightingale  
 That thou may'st listen the cold dews among?  
 O Sorrow  
 Why dost borrow  
 Hearts lightness from the Merriment of May?  
 A Lover would not tread  
 A Cowslip on the head  
 Though he should dance from eve till peep of day.  
 Nor any drooping flower  
 Held sacred for thy bower  
 Wherever he may sport himself and play.  
 To Sorrow  
 I bad good morrow  
 And thought to leave her far away behind  
 But cheerly cheerly  
 She loves me dearly—  
 so  
 She is to me ~~too~~ constant and so Kind  
 I would deceive her  
 And so leave her  
 But Ah! she is to(o) constant and too Kind!  
 Give our Love to Marianne—  
 Your's sincerely.  
 John Keats

28. To BENJAMIN BAILEY. *Monday 3 Nov. 1817.*

*Address:* Mr B. Bailey | Magdalen Hall | Oxford.

*Postmarks:* LOMBARD ST. and 5 NO 1817.

Monday—Hampstead

My dear Bailey,

Before I received your Letter I had heard of your disappointment—an unlook'd for piece of villainy.<sup>1</sup> I am

<sup>1</sup> Letter 26, p. 53, written close upon the end of October, intimates that Bailey had obtained a curacy. What the trouble was that only a few days later raised Keats's spleen and prompted him to write in terms of almost incoherent abuse of the Bishop of Lincoln is not at all apparent. Possibly there was some hitch in connexion with Bailey's ordination for which the Bishop was responsible. Keats was still sending letters to his friend at Oxford in the following June, but Letter 79, which he directed to Peterborough in July, was redirected to 'Rev<sup>d</sup>' Mr. B. Bailey at Carlisle.

glad to hear there was an hindrance to your speaking your Mind to the Bishop: for all may go straight yet—as to being ordained—but the disgust consequent cannot pass away in a hurry—it must be shocking to find in a sacred Profession such barefaced oppression and impertinence—The Stations and Grandeurs of the World have taken it into their heads that they cannot commit themselves towards and inferior in rank—but is not the impertinence from one above to one below more wretchedly mean than from the low to the high? There is something so nauseous in self-willed yawning impudence in the shape of conscience—it sinks the Bishop of Lincoln<sup>1</sup> into a smashed frog putrifying: that a rebel against common decency should escape the Pillory! That a mitre should cover a Man guilty of the most coxcombical, tyranical and indolent impertinence! I repeat this word for the offence appears to me most especially *impertinent*—and a very serious return would be the Rod—Yet doth he sit in his Palace. Such is this World—and we live—you have surely in a continual struggle against the suffocation of accidents—we must bear (and my Spleen is mad at the thought thereof) the Proud Mans Contumely.<sup>2</sup> O for a recourse somewhat human independant of the great Consolations of Religion and undepraved Sensations—of the Beautiful—the poetical in all things—O for a Remedy against such wrongs within the pale of the World! Should not those things be pure enjoyment should they stand the chance of being contaminated by being called in as antagonists to Bishops? Would not earthly thing do? By Heavens my dear Bailey I know you have a spice of what I mean—you can set me and have set it in all the rubs that may befall me, you have I know a sort of Pride which would kick the Devil on the Jaw Bone and make him drunk with the kick—There is nothing so balmy to a Soul imbittered as yours must be, as Pride—When we look at the Heavens we cannot be proud—but shall stocks and stones be impertinent and say it does not become us to kick them? At this Moment I take your hand—let us walk up yon Mountain of common sense now if our Pride be vain-glorious such a support would fail—yet you feel firm footing—now look beneath at that parcel of knaves and fools.

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Pretymen Tomline (1750–1827).

<sup>2</sup> 'Hamlet', III. i. 71.



Many a Mitre is moving among them. I cannot express how I despise the Man who would wrong or be impertinent to you—The thought that we are mortal makes us groan—

I will speak of something else or my Spleen will get higher and higher—and I am not a bearer of the two edged sword. I hope you will receive an answer from Haydon soon—if not, Pride! Pride! Pride! I have received no more subscription—but shall soon have a full health Liberty and leisure to give a good part of my time to him—I will certainly be in time for him. We have promised him one year let that have elapsed and then do as we think proper. If I did not know how impossible it is, I should say—‘do not at this time of disappointments disturb yourself about others’.—

There has been a flaming attack upon Hunt in the Edinburgh Magazine.<sup>1</sup> I never read any thing so virulent—accusing him of the greatest Crimes dep(r)eciating his Wife his Poetry—his Habits—his company, his Conversation—These Philip(p)ics are to come out in Numbers—call’d ‘the Cockney School of Poetry’. There has been but one Number published—that on Hunt to which they have prefixed a Motto from one Cornelius Webb Poetaster<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ‘On the Cockney School of Poetry, No. I.’—‘Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine’, October 1817, pp. 38–41.

<sup>2</sup> The late Mr. Dykes Campbell had a copy of Keats’s ‘Poems’ (1817) with an inscription believed to be in Cornelius Webb’s writing:—‘This Book was given me by John Keats himself when published in 1817, he living at the time in lodgings near the Poultry of all places in the world for a descriptive poet!’

Cornelius Webb says in the preface to his ‘Lyric Leaves’ (Griffiths, 1832) that the poems were produced in the years 1817 to 1820, and that some of them were printed in two small tracts for private circulation, while others appeared in periodicals. Colvin mentions a volume published by the Olliers in 1821, containing, *inter alia*, an ‘Invocation to Sleep’. That poem appears in the ‘Lyric Leaves’ with the date ‘Jan. 31, 1817’. This little volume is not by any means without merit or charm; but Webb did not rise in literature. He says in 1832 that after 1820 he was ‘forced from poetry by discouragements sufficient enough for the time to compel him to abandon his humble muse’. He is said to have become a reader in the printing house of Clowes, and revised in that capacity ‘The Quarterly Review’ as it passed through the press. He published in 1836 ‘Glances at Life in City and Suburb’, on the title-page of which he is described as ‘Cornelius Webbe [with an e], author of the “Posthumous Papers of a Person lately about Town”’; ‘Lyric Leaves’, &c.’ In 1838 followed two volumes of Essays entitled ‘The Man about Town’, some of which are pleasant enough in a light way, and were reprinted in 1857 under the title of ‘The Absent Man’. A second series of ‘Glances at Life’ appeared in 1848. This was meant to have included a paper which Webb, according to a letter addressed by him to Messrs.

—who unfortunately was of our Party occasionally at Hampstead and took it into his head to write the following—something about—“we’ll talk on Wordsworth Byron—a theme we never tire on and so forth till he comes to Hunt and Keats. In the Motto they have put Hunt and Keats in large Letters—I have no doubt that the second Number was intended for me: but have hopes of its non appearance from the following advertisement in last Sunday’s Examiner. “To Z. The writer of the Article signed Z in Blackwood’s Ed*(i)*nburgh magazine for October 1817 is invited to send his address to the printer of the Examiner, in order that Justice may be executed of *(for on)* the proper person” I dont mind the thing much—but if he should go to such lengths with me as he has done with Hunt I mu*(s)*t infal*(l)*ibly call him to an accout—if he be a human being and appears in Squares and Theatres where we might possibly meet. I dont relish his abuse

Yesterday Rice and I were at Reynolds’—John was to be articted tomorrow I suppose by this time it is done. Jane was much better—At one time or other I will do you a Pleasure and the Poets a little Justice—but it ought to be in a Poem of greater moment than Endymion—I will do it some day—I have seen two Letters of a little Story Reynolds is writing—I wish he would keep at it. Here is the song I enclosed to Jane if you can make it out in this cross wise writing.

Smith, Elder & Co., had written about Keats; but no such paper is in the volume. His ephemeral books got tolerant reviews in the ‘Quarterly’. For an informative paper on Webb by Professor G. Marsh see ‘Philological Quarterly’, vol. 21, no. 3, July 1942.

It must have been some nine or ten months after writing the letter to Bailey that Keats received in Scotland the invitation referred to by Lord Houghton in the following passage:—‘Some mutual friend had forwarded him an invitation from Messrs. Blackwood, injudiciously adding the suggestion, that it would be very advisable for him to visit the Modern Athens, and endeavour to conciliate his literary enemies in that quarter. The sensibility and moral dignity of Keats were outraged by this proposal: it may be imagined what answer he returned, and also that this circumstance may not have been unconnected with the article on him which appeared in the August number of the “Edinburgh Magazine”, as part of a series that had commenced the previous year, and concerning which he had already expressed himself freely.’ Lord Houghton gives Brown as his authority concerning the invitation, but adds—‘Mr. Robert Blackwood, son of the Mr. Blackwood of that time, thinks the circumstance very improbable, and that Mr. Brown must have been mistaken or misinformed. It does, however, appear that in the July of 1818 Mr. Bailey met, at Bishop Gleig’s, in Scotland, a leading contributor to “Blackwood’s Magazine”, with whom he had much conversation respecting Keats, especially about his relations with Leigh Hunt, and Mr. Bailey thought his confidence had been abused.’

O Sorrow!  
 Why dost borrow  
 The natural hue of health from verm(e)il Lips?  
 To give maiden blushes  
 To the white Rose bushes  
 Or ist thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

O Sorrow  
 Why dost borrow  
 The Lustrous Passion from an orb'd eye?  
 To give the glow worm Light?  
 Or on a moonless night  
 To tinge on Syren Shores the salt sea spray?

O Sorrow  
 Why dost borrow  
 The tender ditties from a mourning tongue?  
 To give at Evening pale  
 Unto the Nightingal(e)  
 'That thou mayest listen the cold dews among?

O Sorrow  
 Why dost borrow  
 Hearts lightness from the Merriment of May?  
 A Lover would not tread  
 A Cowslip on the head  
 Though he should dance from eve till peep of day;  
 Nor any drooping flower  
 Held sacred to thy bower  
 Wherever he may sport himself and play.

To Sorrow  
 I bade good morrow,  
 And thought to leave her far away behind  
 But cheerly, cheerly,  
 She loves me dearly—  
 She is to me so constant, and so kind—  
 I would deceive her  
 And so leave her  
 But ah! she is too constant and too kind.

O that I had Orpheus lute—and 'was able to cha(r)m

1817

Letter 29

away all your Griefs and Cares—but all my power is a  
Mite—amid all you⟨r⟩ troubles I shall ever be  
your sincere and affectionate friend  
John Keats

My brothers remembrances to you—  
Give my respects to Gleig and Whitehead.<sup>1</sup>

29. To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE. Nov. 1817.  
*No address.*

My dear Dilke

Mr<sup>s</sup> Dilke or Mr W<sup>m</sup> Dilke whoever of you shall receive  
this present have the kindness to send p<sup>r</sup> Bearer "*Sybilline  
Leaves*"<sup>2</sup> and you⟨r⟩ petitioner shall ever pray as in duty  
bound.

Given under my hand this Wednesday Morning of  
Nov<sup>r</sup> 1817.

John Keats

Vivant Rex et Regina—amen.

30. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. Saturday 22  
Nov. 1817.

*Address:* Mr John H. Reynolds Lambs Conduit St<sup>t</sup>. London.

*Postmarks:* LEATHERHEAD and 22 NO 1817.

Saturday

My Dear Reynolds

There are two things which tease me here—one of them  
Crips, and the other that I cannot go with Tom into  
Devonshire—however I hope to do my duty to myself in  
a week or so; and then I'll try what I can do for my  
neighbour—now is not this virtuous? on returning to  
Town—I'll damn all Idleness—indeed, in superabundance  
of employment, I must not be content to run here and  
there on little two-penny errands—but turn Rakehell, i e  
go a ma⟨s⟩king or Bailey will think me just as great a  
Promise Keeper as *he* thinks you—for myself I do not,—  
and do not remember above one Complaint against you  
for matter o' that—Bailey writes so abominable a hand, to

<sup>1</sup> The first message is written at the end of the letter, the second opposite  
the third and fourth lines of the poem in the 'cross wise country' on the  
first page.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sybilline Leaves' was issued in August, 1817.

give his Letter a fair reading requires a little time: so I had not seen, when I saw you last, his invitation to Oxford at Christmas—I'll go with you. You know how poorly Rice was—I do not think it was all corporeal—bodily pain was not used to keep him silent. I'll tell you what; he was hurt at what your Sisters said about his joking with your Mother, he was, soothly to sain—It will all blow over. God knows, my Dear Reynolds, I should not talk any sorrow to you—you must have enough vexations—so I won't any more—If I ever start a rueful subject in a Letter to you—blow me! Why don't you—Now I was agoing to ask a very silly Question neither you nor any body else could answer, under a folio, or at least a Pamphlet—you shall judge—Why don't you, as I do, look unconcerned at what may be called more particularly Heart-vexations? They never surprize me—lord! a man should have the fine point of his soul taken off to become fit for this world—I like this place very much. There is Hill & Dale and a little River—I went up Box hill this Evening after the Moon—you a' seen the Moon—came down—and wrote some lines. Whenever I am separated from you, and not engaged in a continued Poem—every Letter shall bring you a lyric—but I am too anxious for you to enjoy the whole, to send you a particle. One of the three Books I have with me is Shakespear's Poems: I neer found so many beauties in the Sonnets—they seem to be full of fine things said unintentionally—in the intensity of working out conceits. Is this to be borne? Hark ye!

When lofty trees I see barren of leaves  
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,  
And Summer's green all girded up in sheaves,  
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard.<sup>1</sup>

He has left nothing to say about nothing or anything: for look at Snails, you know what he says about Snails, you know where he talks about "cockled Snails"<sup>2</sup>—well, in one of these sonnets, he says—the chap slips into—no! I lie! this is in the Venus and Adonis:<sup>1</sup> the Simile brought it to my Mind.

<sup>1</sup> Sonnet, xii, 5–8.

<sup>2</sup> 'Cockled snails' is in 'Love's Labour's Lost', iv. iii. 338.

Audi—As the snail, whose tender horns being hit,  
 Shrinks back into his shelly cave with pain  
 And there all smothered up in shade doth sit,  
 Long after fearing to put forth again:  
 So at his bloody view her eyes are fled,  
 Into the deep dark Cabins of her head.<sup>1</sup>

He overwhelms a genuine Lover of Poesy with all manner  
 of abuse, talking about—

“a poet’s rage  
 And stretched metre of an antique song.”<sup>2</sup>

Which by the by will be a capital Motto for my Poem,  
 won’t it?—He speaks too of “Time’s antique pen”<sup>3</sup>—and  
 “april’s first born flowers”<sup>4</sup>—and “deaths eternal cold”.<sup>5</sup>—  
 By the Whim King! I’ll give you a Stanza, because it is  
 not material in connection and when I wrote it I wanted  
 you to—give your vote, pro or con.—

Crystalline Brother of the belt of Heaven,  
 Aquarius! to whom King Jove hath given  
 Two liquid pulse-streams! ’stead of feather’d wings—  
 Two fan-like fountains—thine illuminings  
 For Dian play:  
 Dissolve the frozen purity of air;  
 Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare,  
 Show cold through watery pinions: make more bright  
 The Star-Queen’s Crescent on her marriage night:  
 Haste Haste away!<sup>6</sup>—

Now I hope I shall not fall off in the winding up, as the  
 woman said to the <sup>7</sup>—I mean up and down. I see  
 there is an advertizement in the Chronicle to Poets—he is  
 so overloaded with poems on the late Princess.<sup>8</sup>—I suppose  
 you do not lack—send me a few—lend me thy hand to  
 laugh a little<sup>9</sup>—send me a little pullet sperm,<sup>10</sup> a few finch  
 eggs<sup>11</sup>—and remember me to each of our Card playing  
 Club—When you die you will all be turned into Dice, and  
 be put in pawn with the Devil—for Cards they crumple

<sup>1</sup> ‘Venus and Adonis’, 1033–8.

<sup>2</sup> Sonnet xvii, 11–12, used on the title-page of ‘Endymion’.

<sup>3</sup> Sonnet xix, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. xxi. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. xiii. 12.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Endymion’, iv. 581–90.

<sup>7</sup> Word illegible.

<sup>8</sup> The Princess Charlotte died on 6 November 1817.

<sup>9</sup> ‘1 Henry IV’, II. iv. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. ‘Merry Wives of Windsor’, III. v. 32.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. ‘Troilus and Cressida’, v. i. 41.

up<sup>1</sup> like any King—I mean John in the stage play what pertains Prince Arthur.

I rest

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

Give my love to both houses<sup>2</sup>—hinc atque illinc.

31. To BENJAMIN BAILEY. *Saturday 22 Nov. 1817.*

*Address:* Mr B. Bailey | Magdalen Hall | Oxford—

*Postmarks:* LEATHERHEAD and 22 NO 1817.

My dear Bailey,

I will get over the first part of this (*unsaid*)<sup>3</sup> Letter as soon as possible for it relates to the affair of poor Crips—To a Man of your nature such a Letter as Haydon's must have been extremely cutting—What occasions the greater part of the World's Quarrels? simply this, two Minds meet and do not understand each other time enough to prevent any shock or surprise at the conduct of either party—As soon as I had known Haydon three days I had got enough of his character not to have been surprised at such a Letter as he has hurt you with. Nor when I knew it was it a principle with me to drop his acquaintance although with you it would have been an imperious feeling. I wish you knew all that I think about Genius and the Heart—and yet I think you are thoroughly acquainted with my innermost breast in that respect, or you could not have known me even thus long and still hold me worthy to be your dear friend. In passing however I must say of one thing that has pressed upon me lately and encreased my Humility and capability of submission and that is this truth—Men of Genius are great as certain ethereal Chemicals operating on the Mass of neutral intellect—by (*for but*) they have not any individuality, any determined Character—I would call the top and head of those who have a proper self Men of Power—

But I am running my head into a Subject which I am certain I could not do justice to under five years S<t>udy and 3 vols octavo—and moreover long to be talking about the Imagination—so my dear Bailey do not think of this

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'King John', v. vii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Romeo and Juliet', iii. i. 96, 112.

<sup>3</sup> A mild play upon the lawyerly phrase 'this said letter' which would be Haydon's to Bailey: 'this *unsaid* letter' Keats's to Bailey.

unpleasant affair if possible—do not—I defy any harm to come of it—I defy. I'll shall write to Crips this Week and request him to tell me all his goings on from time to time by Letter wherever I may be—it will all go on well so don't because you have suddenly discover'd a Coldness in Haydon suffer yourself to be teased. Do not my dear fellow. O I wish I was as certain of the end of all your troubles as that of your momentary start about the authenticity of the Imagination. I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination—What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth<sup>1</sup>—whether it existed before or not—for I have the same Idea of all our Passions as of Love they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty. In a Word, you may know my favorite Speculation by my first Book and the little song I sent in my last<sup>2</sup>—which is a representation from the fancy of the probable mode of operating in these Matters. The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream<sup>3</sup>—he awoke and found it truth. I am the more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how any thing can be known for truth by consequitive reasoning—and yet it must be. Can it be that even the greatest Philosopher ever arrived at his goal without putting aside numerous objections. However it may be, O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts! It is 'a Vision in the form of Youth' a Shadow of reality to come—and this consideration has further convinced me for it has come as auxiliary to another favorite Speculation of mine, that we shall enjoy ourselves here after by having what we called happiness on Earth repeated in a finer tone and so repeated. And yet such a fate can only befall those who delight in Sensation rather than hunger as you do after Truth. Adam's dream will do here and seems to be a conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflection is the same as human Life and its Spiritual repetition. But as I was saying—the simple imaginative Mind may have its rewards in the repeti(ti)on of its own silent Working coming continually on the Spirit with a fine Suddenness—to compare great things with small—have you never by being Surprised with an old Melody—in a delicious

<sup>1</sup> Compare this with the close of the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'.

<sup>2</sup> The song, 'O sorrow', Letter 28, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> See 'Paradise Lost', viii. 460-90.



place—by a delicious voice, felt over again your very Speculations and Surmises at the time it first operated on your Soul—do you not remember forming to yourself the singer's face more beautiful than *(for than)* it was possible and yet with the elevation of the Moment you did not think so—even then you were mounted on the Wings of Imagination so high—that the Prototype must be here after—that delicious face you will see. What a time! I am continually running away from the subject—sure this cannot be exactly the case with a complex Mind—one that is imaginative and at the same time careful of its fruits—who would exist partly on Sensation partly on thought—to whom it is necessary that years should bring the philosophic Mind<sup>1</sup>—such an one I consider your's and therefore it is necessary to your eternal Happiness that you not only ~~have~~ drink this old Wine of Heaven, which I shall call the redigestion of our most ethereal Musings on Earth; but also increase in knowledge and know all things. I am glad to hear you are in a fair way for Easter—you will soon get through your unpleasant reading and then!—but the world is full of troubles and I have not much reason to think myself pestered with many—I think Jane or Marianne has a better opinion of me than I deserve—for really and truly I do not think my Brothers illness connected with mine—you know more of the real Cause than they do now have I any chance of being rack'd as you have been—You perhaps at one time thought there was such a thing as Worldly Happiness to be arrived at,<sup>2</sup> at certain periods of time marked out—you have of necessity from your disposition been thus led away—I scarcely remember counting upon any Happiness—I look not for it if it be not in the present hour—nothing startles me beyond the Moment. The setting Sun will always set me to rights—or if a Sparrow come before my Window I take part in its existence and pick about the Grave! The first thing that strikes me on hearing a Misfortune having befallen another is this. 'Well it cannot be helped—he will have the pleasure of trying the resources of his spirit'—and I beg now my dear Bailey that hereafter should you

<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Bailey well remembered', says Lord Houghton, 'the exceeding delight that Keats took in Wordsworth's "Ode to Immortality". He was never weary of repeating it.'

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 62, p. 133.

observe any thing cold in me not to but *<for put>* it to the account of heartlessness but abstraction—for I assure you I sometimes feel not the influence of a Passion or affection during a whole week<sup>1</sup>—and so long this sometimes continues I begin to suspect myself and the genui<sup>(ne)</sup>ness of my feelings at other times—thinking them a few barren Tragedy-tears—My Brother Tom is much improved—he is going to Devonshire—whither I shall follow him—at present I am just arrived at Dorking to change the Scene—change the Air and give me a spur to wind up my Poem, of which there are wanting 500 Lines. I should have been here a day sooner but the Reynoldses persuaded me to stop in Town to meet your friend Christie.<sup>2</sup> There were Rice and Martin—we talked about Ghosts. I will have some talk with Taylor and let you know—when please God I come down at Christmas. I will find that Examiner if possible. My best regards to Gleig. My Brothers to you and M<sup>rs</sup> Bentley's

Your affectionate friend  
John Keats—

I want to say much more to you—a few hints will set me going.

Direct Burford Bridge near dorking

32. To GEORGE and THOMAS KEATS. *Sunday <21 Dec. 1817>.*

*Address and postmark not recorded.*

Hampstead Sunday  
22 December 1817

My dear Brothers,

I must crave your pardon for not having written ere this. \* \* \* I saw Kean return to the public in Richard III.<sup>3</sup> and finely he did it, and at the request of Reynolds

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letters 26 and 76, pp. 55 and 177.

<sup>2</sup> C. W. Dilke notes—'This Christie was I think Lockhart's friend <J. H. Christie>—who was unhappily drawn into Lockhart's quarrel with John Scott and killed him. Strange that this quarrel and the consequent loss of life of Scott, the Editor of the "London Magazine", is not once alluded to [in the "Life, Letters", &c.], although the quarrel originated in the attack on Lockhart as the writer of the articles on the Cockney School, or as Editor of "Blackwood". Christie I had met before and have since the duel: and he appeared to be a mild amiable man.'—H.B.F.

<sup>3</sup> Kean played the Duke of Gloucester in Shakespeare's 'King Richard the Third' on December 15, and Luke (Jeffrey has *Duke*) in 'Riches' on December 18. Keats's critique appeared in 'The Champion' of December 21, and was reprinted in Forman's edition of Keats's works in 1883.

I went to criticise his *Luke in Riches*—the critique is in to-day's *Champion*, which I send you with the *Examiner* in which you will find very proper lamentation on the obsolescence of Christmas Gambols and pastimes:<sup>1</sup> but it was mixed up with so much egotism of that drivelling nature that pleasure is entirely lost. Hone the publisher's trial, you must find very amusing; and as Englishmen very encouraging—his *Not Guilty* is a thing, which not to have been, would have dulled still more Liberty's Emblazoning—Lord Ellenborough has been paid in his own coin—Wooler and Hone<sup>2</sup> have done us an essential service—I have had two very pleasant evenings with Dilke yesterday and to-day, and am at this moment just come from him and feel in the humour to go on with this, began in the morning, and from which he came to fetch me. I spent Friday evening with Wells<sup>3</sup> and went the next morning to see *Death on the Pale Horse*.<sup>4</sup> It is a wonderful picture, when West's age is considered; But there is nothing to be intense upon; no women one feels mad to kiss; no face swelling into reality—the excellence of every Art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth—Examine King Lear and you will find this exemplified throughout; but in this picture we have unpleasantness without any momentous depth of speculation excited, in which to bury its repulsiveness—The picture is larger than Christ rejected.<sup>5</sup> I dined with Haydon the Sunday after you left, and had a very pleasant day, I dined too (for I have been out too much lately) with Horace Smith and met his two Brothers with Hill<sup>6</sup> and Kingston and one Du Bois,<sup>6</sup> they only served to convince me, how

<sup>1</sup> 'Christmas and other old National Merry-makings considered, with reference to the Nature of the Age, and to the Desirableness of their Revival'. Leigh Hunt in 'The Examiner', December 21 and 28, 1817.

<sup>2</sup> Popular publishers. The three trials of William Hone (1780–1842) for publishing 'impious, profane, and scandalous libels' took place on the 18th, 19th, and 20th of December 1817 respectively.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Wells (1800–79), the author of 'Stories after Nature' and 'Joseph and his Brethren'. Keats wrote a sonnet to him, 'To a friend who sent me some Roses'.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin West, P.R.A. (1738–1820). There is a reference to this picture in Keats's paper on Kean in 'Richard Duke of York', which appeared in 'The Champion' for Sunday, the 28th of December 1817. 'Christ rejected' was also by West.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Hill (1760–1840), book collector, part proprietor of 'The Monthly Mirror' and 'discoverer' of Kirke White.

<sup>6</sup> Edward du Bois (1774–1850), wit and man of letters and judge in the

superior humour is to wit in respect to enjoyment—These men say things which make one start, without making one feel, they are all alike; their manners are alike; they all know fashionables; they have a mannerism in their very eating and drinking, in their mere handling a Decanter—They talked of Kean and his low Company. Would I were with that Company—instead of yours said I to myself! I know such like acquaintance will never do for me and yet I am going to Reynolds, on Wednesday—Brown and Dilke walked with me and back from the Christmas pantomime. I had not a dispute but a disquisition with Dilke, on various subjects; several things dovetailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean *Negative Capability*, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason—Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude<sup>1</sup> caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining Content with half knowledge. This pursued through Volumes<sup>2</sup> would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.

Shelley's poem<sup>3</sup> is out and there are words about its

Court of Requests; contributed regularly to the 'Morning Chronicle'; edited 'The Monthly Mirror'; wrote a skit on Godwin's 'St. Leon' (1800), &c. Also mentioned in Letter 98, p. 256.

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey has 'insolated verisimiliture'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 31, p. 66, l. 2 from foot.

<sup>3</sup> Keats can hardly have known what intolerable vexation and disappointment Shelley was undergoing in his relations with the Olliers, whose doings with Keats's own first volume of poems had been so little to his satisfaction (see Letter 47, p. 100, n. 4). 'Laon and Cythna', the book here referred to, had occupied months of Shelley's thought and labour, and was actually printed off and ready for issue when Charles Ollier found himself afraid to publish it. The book was withdrawn till it could be toned down by means of numerous cancel-leaves which made the hero and heroine, originally brother and sister, strangers in blood, and did away with some antitheistic passages. 'Laon and Cythna' was ready before the end of November; and a few copies were distributed. By the middle of December the struggle between publisher and poet was raging. On the 27th of that month Shelley was clamouring for the last proofs of the cancel-leaves. Up to the 15th of January he had not received completed copies of the book as converted into 'The Revolt of Islam'; but a week later he was giving instructions about advertising without relaxation: hence the book was no doubt finally out by then. Keats's reference must be to the volume in its original form, which was at that moment undergoing revision after a somewhat active attempt to recover all copies sent out to the booksellers.—H.B.F.

being objected too, as much as Queen Mab was. Poor Shelley I think he has his Quota of good qualities, in sooth la!! Write soon to your most sincere friend and affectionate Brother

John

33. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Wednesday 31 Dec. 1817.*

*Address:* Benjamin Robert Haydon | Lisson Grove North | Paddington.

*Postmark:* 1 JA 1818.

Hampstead Dec<sup>r</sup> 31<sup>st</sup>

My dear Haydon,

I forgot on Sunday to ask you for Cripps's direction as you might chance to know—on monday you were out in the Sun. I shall be with you shortly to have a talk about him. I thoughtlessly gave you a promise for Sunday—now I have just received a 'yes' from a friend of mine to pass that said day here—so be lenient and your petitioner shall ever pray &c I met Wordsworth on Hampstead Heath this Morning.<sup>1</sup>

Your affectionate friend  
John Keats

34. To GEORGE and THOMAS KEATS. *Monday 5 Jan. 1818.*

*Address:* Mess<sup>rs</sup> Keats | Post Office | Teignmouth | Devonshire.

*Postmark:* 5 JA 1818.

Featherstone Build<sup>gs</sup> Monday

My dear Brothers,

I ought to have written before, and you should have had a long Letter last week, but I undertook the Champion for Reynolds who is at Exeter. I wrote two articles, one on the Drury Lane Pantomime, the other on the Covent Garden New Tragedy,<sup>2</sup> which they have not put in. The one they have inserted is so badly punc(t)uated that, you perceive, I am determined never to write more without some care in that particular. Wells tells me, that you are licking your Chops, Tom, in expectation of my Book

<sup>1</sup> See Letter 34, p. 174 and note 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Postscript, p. 77. The tragedy was 'Retribution, or the Chieftain's Daughter'—the pantomime 'Don Giovanni'. The two papers appeared in 'The Champion' for 4 January 1818, and were reprinted in the Library edition of Keats's works as reissued in 1889.

coming out. I am sorry to say I have not begun my corrections yet: tomorrow I set out. I called on Sawrey<sup>1</sup> this morning. He did not seem to be at all out at any thing I said and the enquiries I made with regard to your spitting of Blood: and moreover desired me to ask you to send him a correct accou(n)t of all your sensations and symptoms concerning the Palpitation and the spitting and the Cough—if you have any. Your last Letter gave me at great Pleasure for I think the Invalid is in a better spirit there along the Edge<sup>2</sup>—and as for George I must immediately, now I think of it, correct a little misconception of a part of my last Letter. The Miss Reynolds have never said one word against me about you,<sup>3</sup> or by any means endeavoured to lessen you in my estimation. That is not what I refer(r)ed to: but the manner and thoughts which I knew they internally had towards you—time will show. Wells and Severn dined with me yesterday: we had a very pleasant day. I pitched upon another bottle of claret—Port—we enjoyed ourselves very much were all very witty and full of Rhyme—we played a Concert<sup>4</sup> from 4 o'clock till 10—drank your Healths the Hunts and N. B. Severn Peter Pindars. I said on that day the only good thing I was ever guilty of—we were talking about Stephens and the 1<sup>st</sup> Gallery. I said I wondered that careful Folks would go there for although it was but a Shilling still you had to pay through the Nose. I saw the Peachey family in a Box at Drury one Night. I have got such a curious<sup>5</sup>—or rather I had such, now I am in my own hand. I have had a great deal of pleasant time with Rice lately, and am getting initiated into a little cant—they call drinking deep dying scarlet, and when you breathe in your wartering they bid

<sup>1</sup> S. Sawrey, surgeon and accoucheur, of 27 Bedford Row, High Holborn. The passage 'I called on' to 'time will show' does not appear in Jeffrey's transcript.

<sup>2</sup> The brothers were staying at Tcignmouth on the south coast of Devon: the expression 'along the Edge' is peculiar.

<sup>3</sup> This curious locution is Keats's. What he meant was to assure his brothers that the Misses Reynolds had not said anything to him *against* George. It will be noticed that there is an omission at the beginning of the previous letter to the brothers, p. 69. Doubtless it is to this omission that we owe the air of mystery here about Jane and Mariane Reynolds and George Keats.

<sup>4</sup> Each one, that is to say, imitated vocally some musical instrument, according to a custom in which Keats and his brothers and intimates indulged.

<sup>5</sup> Keats omitted a word here: judging from the change in the handwriting, I think he intended to write 'curious pen'.

you cry hem and play it off<sup>1</sup>—they call good Wine a pretty tippie, and call getting a Child knocking out an apple, stopping at a Tavern they call hanging out. Where do you sup? is where do you hang out? This day I promised to dine with Wordsworth, and the Weather is so bad that I am undecided for he lives at Mortimer street. I had an invitation to meet him at Kingston's—but not liking that place I sent my excuse—What I think of doing to day is to dine in Mortimer Street (Words<sup>th</sup>) and sup here in Feathrs<sup>ne</sup> Buildg<sup>s</sup> as M<sup>r</sup> Wells has invited me. On Saturday I called on Wordsworth<sup>2</sup> before he went to Kingston's and was surp(r)ised to find him with a stiff Collar. I saw his Spouse and I think his Daughter. I forget whether I had written my last before my Sunday Evening<sup>3</sup> at Haydon's—no I did not or I should have told you Tom of a young man you met at Paris at Scott's of the (torn) Richer<sup>4</sup> I think—he is going to Fezan in Africa there to proceed if possible like Mungo Park—he was very polite to me and enquired very particularly after you—then there was Wordsworth, Lamb, Monkhouse,<sup>5</sup> Landseer, Kingston<sup>6</sup> and your humble Sarvant. Lamb got tip-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. '1 Henry IV', II. iv. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Apropos of Lord Houghton's comment on Letter 44 (p. 96, n. 1), C. W. Dilke, in his annotated copy of the 'Life, Letters', &c., wrote a note on this very meeting. The present letter was not then published. Dilke's note stands thus:—'When Keats first called on Wordsworth he was kept waiting for a long time, and when Wordsworth entered he was in full flower, knee breeches, silk stockings, &c., and in a great hurry as he was going to dine with one of the Commissioners of Stamps. As Keats told this story, and with something of anger, the circumstance perhaps had unconsciously, &c.' The call was made on the 3rd of January 1818. <sup>3</sup> December the 28th, 1817.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Ritchie (1788?–1819), who started on his proposed journey, see Letter 98, p. 256, and died in Africa, wrote a Farewell to England, which was printed by Alaric Watts in his 'Poetical Album', 1828, from the 'London Magazine' of April 1821, where it had appeared under the title of 'Albion'. In writing from Paris to the great-grandfather of Mr. David Garnett in 1818 Ritchie displayed remarkable critical acumen concerning Keats: 'If you have not seen the Poems of Keats, a lad of nineteen or twenty, they are well worth your reading. If I am not mistaken he is to be the great poetical Luminary of the Age to come.' Mr. Garnett printed all that is preserved of Ritchie's letter in 'The New Statesman and Nation', for the 10th of June 1933, p. 763.

The reference to the house at which Tom Keats met Ritchie is extremely interesting, as indicating how poor John Scott probably became possessed of that copy-book of Tom's in which so many of the early poems of John Keats were written out fair by his younger brother.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Monkhouse, 'the noble-minded kinsman, by wedlock, of Wordsworth'; d. 1825.

<sup>6</sup> John Kingston, appointed Commissioner of Stamps in England on 6 November 1818.

sey and blew up Kingston—proceeding so far as to take the Candle across the Room hold it to his face and show us wh-a-at-sort-fello-he-waas I astonished Kingston at supper with a pertinacity in favour of drinking—keeping my two glasses at work in a knowing way—

I have seen Fanny twice lately—she enquired particularly after you and wants a Co-partnership Letter from you—she has been unwell but is improving—I think she will be quick—M<sup>rs</sup> Abbey was saying that the Keatses were ever indolent—that they would ever be so and that it was born in them—Well whispered fanny to me If it is born with us how can we help it—She seems very anxious for a Letter—She as I asked her what I should get for her she said a Medal of the Princess.<sup>1</sup> I called on Haslam—we dined very snugly together—he sent me a Hare last Week which I sent to M<sup>rs</sup> Dilk(e). Brown is not come back. I and Dilk(e) are getting capital Friends—he is going to take the Champion—he has sent his farce to Convent Garden—I met Bob Harris in the Slips at Covent Garden—we had a good deal of curious chat—he came out with his old humble opinion—The Covent Garden Pantomi(m)e is a very nice one—but they have a middling Harlequin, a bad Pantoloon, a worse Clown and a shocking Columbine who is one of the Miss Dennets. I suppose you will see my Critique on the new Tragedy in the next Week's Champion<sup>2</sup>—It is a shocking bad one. I have not seen Hunt, he was out when I called—M<sup>rs</sup> Hunt looks as well as ever I saw her after her Confinement—There is an article in the sennight Examiner on Godwin's Mandeville signed E. K. I think it Miss Kents<sup>3</sup>—I will send it. There are fine Subscriptions going on for Hone.<sup>4</sup> You ask me what degrees there are between Scotts Novels and those of Smollet. They appear to me to be quite distinct in every particular—more especially in their aim—Scott endeavours to throw so interesting and romantic a colour-

<sup>1</sup> A medal commemorative of the recent untimely death of the Princess Charlotte, on the 6th of November 1817.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 69 and postscript to this letter, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> The article which Keats seems to have attributed to his admirer, Miss Bessy Kent (Hunt's sister-in-law), was in fact by Shelley, 'E. K.' standing for 'Elfin Knight', a pseudonym of Shelley's. The review appeared in 'The Examiner' for Sunday the 28th of December 1817, pp. 826-7.—H.B.F.

<sup>4</sup> Among the subscribers were 'Leigh and John Hunt, Examiner Office, not what they would, but what they could £5' and 'Percy B. Shelly, Marlow £5'. See Letter 32, p. 70 and note 2, and p. 148, note 2.



ing into common and low Characters as to give them a touch of the Sublime—Smollet on the contrary pulls down and levels what with other Men would continue Romance. The Grand parts of Scott are within the reach of more Minds that *<for than>* the finest humours in Humphrey Clincker—I forget whether that fine thing of the Sargeant is Fielding's or Smollet's but it gives me more pleasure that *<for than>* the whole Novel of the Antiquary—you must remember what I mean.<sup>1</sup> Some one says to the Sargeant—"Thats a non sequiter," "if you come to that" replies the Sargeant "you're another."

I see by Wells' Letter, M<sup>r</sup> Abbey does not overstock you with Money—you must write—I have not seen Loveless yet—but expect it on Wednesday—I am affraid it is gone. Severn tells me he has an order for some drawings for the Emperor of Russia. I was at a dance at Redhall's and passed a pleasant time enough—drank deep and won 10.6 at cutting for Half Guineas. There was a younger Brother of the Squibs made himself very conspicuous after the Ladies had retired from the supper table by giving Mater Omnium—M<sup>r</sup> Redhall said he did not understand any thing but plain english—whereat Rice egged the young fool on to say the Word plainly out. After which there was an enquiry about the derivation of the Word C—t when while two parsons and Grammarians were sitting together and settling the matter W<sup>m</sup> Squibs interrupting them said a very good thing—Gentlemen says he I have always understood it to be a Root and not a Derivative! On proceeding to the Pot in the Cupboard it soon became full on which the Court door was opened Frank Floodgate bawls out—Hoollo! here's an opposition pot—Ay, says Rice in one you have a Yard for your pot, and in the other a pot for your Yard—Bailey was there and seemed to enjoy the Evening—Rice said he cared less about the hour than any one and the p(r)oof is his dancing—he cares not for time, dancing as if he was deaf. Old Red(h)all not being used to give parties had no idea of the Quantity of wine that would be drank and he ac(t)ually put in readiness on the kitchen stairs 8 dozen—Every one enquires after you—and every one desires their remembrances to you. You must get well Tom and then I shall feel 'Whole and

<sup>1</sup> Fielding's 'Tom Jones', Book IX, chapter 6.

general as the casing Air'.<sup>1</sup> Give me as many Letters as you like and write to Sawrey soon—I received a short Letter from Bailey about Crips and one from Haydon ditto—Haydon thinks he improves very much Here⟨'s⟩ a happy twelveth day to you and may we pass the next together—Mr<sup>s</sup> Wells desires<sup>2</sup> particularly to Tom and her respects to George—and I desire no better than to be ever Your most affectionate

Brother John—

I had not opened the Champion before—I find both my articles in it—

35. To JOHN TAYLOR. *Saturday 10 Jan. 1818.*

*Address:* Mr J. Taylor | Bond Street.

*Postmark:* 10 JA 1818.

Saturday morning

My dear Taylor,

Several things have kept me from you lately:—first you had got into a little hell,<sup>3</sup> which I was not anxious to reconnoitre. Secondly, I have made a vow not to call again without my first book:<sup>4</sup> so you may expect to see me in four days.<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, I have been racketing too much, & do not feel over well. I have seen Wordsworth frequently—Dined with him last Monday—Reynolds, I suppose you have seen. Just scribble me thus many lines, to let me know you are in the land of the living, & well. Remember me to the Fleet Street Household—And should you see any from Percy Street,<sup>6</sup> give my kindest regards to them.

Your sincere friend John Keats

<sup>1</sup> 'Macbeth', III. iv. 23—'As broad and general as the casing air'. Cf. Letter 61, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> I think Keats left out a word here: there is no apostrophe after 'Wells', as previously printed.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Blunden suggests that Taylor's 'little hell' meant the dispute between him and Leigh Hunt over the transference of 'Rimini'.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. of 'Endymion' as written fair and revised for the press. If the date to which the last paragraph of Letter 37 is assigned is correct, Taylor did not receive the 'copy' before the 20th of January: see p. 81.

<sup>5</sup> It was more like ten days, see p. 81.

<sup>6</sup> i.e. De Wint, Hilton, and their wives.

Letter 36

January

36. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Saturday 10 Jan. 1818.*

Address: Benjamin Robert Haydon | Lisson Grove North | Paddington

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and JA 10 1818

Saturday Morn.

My dear Haydon,

I should have seen you ere this, but on account of my sister being in Town: so that when I have sometimes made ten paces towards you, Fanny has called me into the City; and the Xmas Holydays are your only time to see Sisters, that is if they are so situated as mine. I will be with you early next week—to night it should be, but we have a sort of a Club every Saturday evening—to morrow—but I have on that day an insuperable engagement—Crips has been down to me, and appears sensible that a binding to you would be of the greatest advantage to him—if such a thing

be done it cannot be before <sup>£</sup>150 or <sup>£</sup>200 are secured in subscriptions to him. I will write to Bailey about it, give a Copy of the Subscribers names to every one I know who

is likely to get a <sup>£</sup>5 for him. I will leave a Copy at Taylor and Hesseys, Rodwell and Martin—and will ask Kingston and Co. to cash up.

Your friendship for me is now getting into its teens—and I feel the past. Also eve(r)y day older I get—the greater is my idea of your atchievements in Art: and I am convinced that there are three things to rejoice at in this Age—The Excursion Your Pictures, and Hazlitt's depth of Taste.

Your's affectionately  
John Keats—

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. (*Jan. 1818.*)

*No address or postmark.*

My dear Keats, I feel greatly delighted by your high opinion, allow me to add sincerely a fourth to be proud of—*John Keats' genius!*—this I speak from my heart—You & Bewick are the only men I ever liked with all my heart, for Wordsworth being older, there is no equality tho' I reverence him and love him devotedly—and now you know my peculiar feelings in wishing to have a notice when you cannot keep an engagement with me; there can never be as long as we live any

ground of dispute between us—My Friendship for you is beyond its teens, & beginning to ripen to maturity—I always saw through your nature at once & you shall always find me a devoted & affectionate Brother.—With respect to Cripps, I sincerely think it would be for our mutual advantage to have him bound, I would instruct him for the first two years, and then in the last he would be a great assistance to me. I will subscribe £5—it is all I can afford, and all which ought to be expected of me, as I will do all in my power to inform him—I like him much he is docile & industrious & improves rapidly—I hope we shall succeed in getting the money—do your utmost & so will I—In the mean time I will go on with his Studies—with respect to our meeting the sooner my dear Keats the better—but accept this engagement as long as we live—every Sunday at *three* I shall be happy to see you as long as I live and you live, and as long as I have a bit of beef to give you when you have other engagements more important, come the Sunday following &c

37. To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS. *Tuesday* (13 Jan. 1818).

*Address and postmark not recorded.*

Hampstead, Tuesday.

My dear Brothers,

I am certain I think, of having a letter to-morrow morning; for I expected one so much this morning, having been in town two days, at the end of which my expectations began to get up a little. I found two on the table, one from Bailey and one from Haydon. I am quite perplexed in a world of doubts and fancies—there is nothing stable in the world; uproar's your only music—I don't mean to include Bailey in this and so I dismiss him from this with all the opprobrium he deserves—that is in so many words, he is one of the noblest men alive at the present day. In a note to Haydon about a week ago<sup>1</sup> (which I wrote with a full sense of what he had done, and how he had never manifested any little mean drawback in his value of me) I said if there were three things superior in the modern world, they were 'The Excursion', Haydon's Pictures, and Hazlitt's depth of Taste. So I do believe—not thus speaking with any poor vanity—that works of genius are the first things in this world. No! for that sort of probity and disinterestedness which such men as Bailey possess, does hold and grasp the tip-top of any spiritual honors that can be paid to anything in this world. And moreover having this feeling at this present come over me in its full force,

<sup>1</sup> Letter 36, p. 78.

I sat down to write to you with a grateful heart, in that I had not a Brother who did not<sup>1</sup> feel and credit me for a deeper feeling and devotion for his uprightness, than for any marks of genius however splendid. I was speaking about doubts and fancies—I mean there has been a quarrel of a severe nature between Haydon and Reynolds and another ('the Devil rides upon a fiddle stick')<sup>2</sup> between Hunt and Haydon. The first grew from the Sunday on which Haydon invited some friends to meet Wordsworth. Reynolds never went, and never sent any Notice about it, this offended Haydon more than it ought to have done—he wrote a very sharp and high note to Reynolds and then another in palliation—but which Reynolds feels as an aggravation of the first.—Considering all things, Haydon's frequent neglect of his appointments &c., his notes were bad enough to put Reynolds on the right side of the question—but then Reynolds has no powers of sufferance; no idea of having the thing against him; so he answered Haydon in one of the most cutting letters I ever read; exposing to himself all his own weaknesses and going on to an excess, which whether it is just or no, is what I would fain have unsaid, the fact is they are both in the right and both in the wrong.

The quarrel with Hunt I understand thus far. Mrs H. was in the habit of borrowing silver of Haydon—the last time she did so, Haydon asked her to return it at a certain time—she did not—Haydon sent for it—Hunt went to expostulate on the infelicacy &c.—they got to words and parted for ever. All I hope is at some time to bring them all together again.—Lawk! Molly there's been such doings—Yesterday evening I made an appointment with Wells to go to a private theatre, and it being in the neighbourhood of Drury Lane, and thinking we might be fatigued with sitting the whole evening in one dirty hole, I got the Drury Lane ticket,<sup>3</sup> and therewith we divided the evening with a spice of Richard III.—

(About 19 January 1818.)

Good Lord! I began this letter nearly a week ago, what have I been doing since—I have been—I mean not been

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hebrews iv. 15.

<sup>2</sup> '1 Henry IV', ii. iv. 542.

<sup>3</sup> This may mean Brown's life admission to Drury Lane Theatre: see Biographical Memoranda.

sending last Sunday's paper to you I believe because it was not near me—for I cannot find it and my conscience presses heavy on me for not sending it. You would have had one last Thursday, but I was called away, and have been about somewhere ever since. Where? What? Well I rejoice almost that I have not heard from you because no news is good news. I cannot for the world recollect why I was called away, all I know is that there has been a dance at Dilke's, and another at the London Coffee House;<sup>1</sup> to both of which I went. But I must tell you in another letter the circumstances thereof—for though a week should have passed since I wrote on the other side it quite appals me—I can only write in scraps and patches. Brown is returned from Hampstead—Haydon has returned an answer in the same style—they are all dreadfully irritated against each other. On Sunday I saw Hunt and dined with Haydon, met Hazlitt and Bewick<sup>2</sup> there, and took Haslam with me—forgot to speak about Crips though I broke my engagement to Haslam's on purpose. Mem.—Haslam came to meet me, found me at Breakfast, had the goodness to go with me my way. I have just finished the revision of my First Book, and shall take it to Taylor's to-morrow. Do not let me see many days pass without hearing from you.

Your most affectionate Brother,  
John.

38. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Friday 23*  
(*Jan. 1818*).

*No address or postmark.*

*Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>—*

My dear Haydon,

I have a complete fellow-feeling with you in this business—so much so that it would be as well to wait for a choice out of *Hyperion*—when that Poem is done there will be a wide range for you—in *Endymion* I think you may have many bits of the deep and sentimental cast—the nature of *Hyperion* will lead me to treat it in a more naked and

<sup>1</sup> On Ludgate Hill, near St. Paul's Churchyard: it was closed in 1867.

<sup>2</sup> William Bewick (1795–1866) writing to his brother on the 11th of February 1818 says: 'I have been at two or three very intellectual dinners since I came. Amongst the company were Horatio Smith, \* \* \*, Keats the poet, Hazlitt the critic, Haydon, Hunt the publisher, &c. &c.'

grecian Manner—and the march of passion and endeavour will be undeviating—and one great contrast between them will be—that the Hero of the written tale being mortal is led on, like Buonaparte, by circumstance; whereas the Apollo in Hyperion being a fore-seeing God will shape his actions like one. But I am counting &c.

Your proposal pleases me—and, believe me, I would not have my Head in the shop windows from any hand but yours—no by Apelles!

I will write Taylor<sup>1</sup> and you shall hear from me

Yours ever John Keats—

39 To JOHN TAYLOR. *Friday 23 (Jan. 1818).*

*No address or postmark.*

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>

My dear Taylor,

I have spoken to Haydon about the Drawing—he would do it with all his Art and Heart too if so I will it—however he has written thus to me—but I must tell you first, he intends painting a finished picture from the Poem—thus he writes

“When I do any thing for your poem, it must be effectual—an honor to both of us—to hurry up a sketch for the season won’t do. I think an engraving from your head, from a Chalk drawing of mine—done with all my might—to which I would put my name, would answer Taylor’s Idea more than the other indeed I am sure of it—this I will do & this will be effectual and as I have not done it for any other human being—it will have an effect”

What think you of this? Let me hear. I shall have my second book in readiness forthwith—

Your’s most sincerely

John Keats—

If Reynolds calls tell him three lines would be acceptable for I am squat at Hampstead

40. To BENJAMIN BAILEY. *Friday 23 Jan. 1818.*

*Address: Mr B. Bailey | Magdalen Hall | Oxford—*

*Postmark: 23 JA 1818*

Friday Jan<sup>y</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup>

My dear Bailey,

Twelve days have pass’d since your last reached me—

<sup>1</sup> He did so on the same day, see Letter 39.

what has gone through the myriads of human Minds since the 12<sup>th</sup> we talk of the immense number of Books, the Volumes ranged thousands by thousands—but perhaps more goes through the human intelligence in 12 days than ever was written. How has that unfortunate family lived through the twelve?<sup>1</sup> One saying of your's I shall never forget—you may not recollect it—it being perhaps said when you were looking on the surface and seeming of Humanity alone, without a thought of the past or the future—or the deëps of good and evil—you were at the moment estranged from speculation and I think you have arguments ready for the Man who would utter it to you—this is a formidable preface for a simple thing—merely you said; “Why should Woman suffer?” Aye. Why should she? ‘By heavens I’d coin my very Soul and drop my “Blood for Drachmas”!’<sup>2</sup> These things are, and he who feels how incompetent the most skyey Knight errantry its (*for* is) to heal this bruised fairness is like a sensitive leaf on the hot hand of thought. Your tearing, my dear friend, a spiritless and gloomy Letter up ~~and~~ to rewrite to me is what I shall never forget—it was to me a real thing. Things have happen’d lately of great Perplexity. You must have heard of them. Reynolds and Haydon retorting and re-criminating—and parting for ever—the same thing has happened between Haydon and Hunt—It is unfortunate—Men should bear with each other—there lives not the Man who may not be cut up, aye hashed to pieces on his weakest side. The best of Men have but a portion of good in them—a kind of spiritual yeast in their frames which creates the ferment of existence—by which a Man is prope’ll’d to act and strive and buffet with Circumstance. The sure way Bailey, is first to know a Man’s faults, and then be passive—if after that he insensibly draws you towards him then you have no Power to break the link. Before I felt interested in either Reynolds or Haydon—I was well read in their faults yet knowing them I have been cementing gradually with both. I have an affection for them both for reasons almost opposite—and to both must I of necessity cling—supported always by the hope that when a little time—a few years shall have tried me

<sup>1</sup> Bailey endorsed this letter: ‘This letter opens the excellent feelings of an excellent heart. “The unfortunate family” mentioned was most kindly treated by poor Keats.’

<sup>2</sup> ‘Julius Caesar’, iv. iii. 72–3.



more fully in their esteem I may be able to bring them together—the time must come because they have both hearts—and they will recollect the best parts of each other when this gust is overblown. I had a Message from you through a Letter to Jane<sup>1</sup> I think about Cripps—there can be no idea of binding till a sufficient sum is sure for him—and even then the thing should be maturely consider'd by all his helpers. I shall try my luck upon as many fat-purses as I can meet with. Cripps is improving very fast. I have the greater hopes of him because he is so slow in devellopment—a Man of great executing Powers at 20—with a look and a speech almost stupid is sure to do something. I have just look'd th(r)ough the second side of your Letter—I feel a great content at it. I was at Hunt's the other day, and he surprised me with a real authenticated Lock of *Milton's Hair*. I know you would like what I wrote thereon—so here it is—as they say of a Sheep in a Nursery Book

On seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair—

*Ode.*

Chief of organic Numbers!  
 Old Scholar of the Spheres!  
 Thy spirit never slumbers,  
 But rolls about our ears  
 For ever and for ever.  
 O, what a mad endeavour  
 Worketh he  
 Who, to thy sacred and ennobled hearse,  
 Would offer a burnt sacrifice of verse  
 And Melody!

How heavenward thou soundedst  
 Live Temple of sweet noise;  
 And discord unconfoundedst:  
 Giving delight new joys,  
 And Pleasure nobler pinions—  
 O where are thy Dominions!  
 Lend thine ear  
 To a young delian oath—aye, by thy soul,  
 By all that from thy mortal Lips did roll;

<sup>1</sup> Jane Reynolds.

And by the Kernel of thine earthly Love,  
 Beauty, in things on earth and things above,  
 When every childish fashion  
 Has vanish'd from my rhyme  
 Will I grey-gone in passion,  
 Give to an after-time  
 Hymning and harmony  
 Of thee, and of thy Works and of thy Life:  
 But vain is now the burning and the strife—  
 Pangs are in vain—until I grow high-rife  
 With Old Philosophy  
 And mad with glimpses at futurity!

For many years my offerings must be hush'd:  
 When I do speak I'll think upon this hour,  
 Because I feel my forehead hot and flush'd,  
 Even at the simplest vassal of thy Power,—  
 A Lock of thy bright hair!  
 Sudden it came,  
 And I was startled when I heard thy name  
 Coupled so unaware—  
 Yet, at the moment, temperate was my blood:  
 Methought I had beheld it from the flood.

Jan<sup>y</sup> 21<sup>st</sup>

This I did at Hunt's<sup>1</sup> at his request—perhaps I should have done something better alone and at home—I have sent my first book<sup>2</sup> to the Press—and this afternoon shall begin preparing the second—my visit to you will be a great spur to quicken the Proceeding—I have not had your Sermon returned—I long to make it the subject of a Letter to you—What do they say at Oxford?

I trust you and Gleig pass much fine time together. Remember me to him and Whitehead. My Brother Tom is getting stronger but his Spitting of blood continues. I sat down to read King Lear yesterday, and felt the greatness of the thing up to the writing of a Sonnet preparatory thereto—in my next you shall have it<sup>3</sup> There were some

<sup>1</sup> Robert Browning possessed, and published in 'The Athenæum' for the 7th of July 1883, a letter from Leigh Hunt containing the pedigree of the lock of Milton's hair celebrated in Keats's poem. This pedigree, though not sufficiently authoritative to satisfy a rigid regard for the ordinary laws of evidence, was ample justification for the faith of the imaginative Keats.—H.B.F.

<sup>2</sup> Of 'Endymion'.

<sup>3</sup> It will be found in Letter 41, p. 87.

miserable reports of Rice's health—I went and lo! Master Jemmy had been to the play the night before and was out at the time—he always comes on his Legs like a Cat—I have seen a good deal of Wordsworth. Hazlitt is lecturing on Poetry at the Surr(e)y institution—I shall be there next Tuesday.

Your most affectionate Friend  
John Keats—

41. To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS. *Friday 23 Jan. 1818.*

*Address:* Messrs. Keats | Teignmouth | Devonshire.

*Postmark:* not recorded.

Friday, 23 January 1818.

My dear Brothers,

I was thinking what hindered me from writing so long, for I have many things to say to you and know not where to begin. It shall be upon a thing most interesting to you my Poem. Well! I have given the 1<sup>st</sup> Book to Taylor; he seemed more than satisfied with it, and to my surprise proposed publishing it in Quarto if Haydon would make a drawing of some event therein, for a Frontispiece.<sup>1</sup> I called on Haydon, he said he would do anything I liked, but said he would rather paint a finished picture, from it, which he seems eager to do; this in a year or two will be a glorious thing for us; and it will be, for Haydon is struck with the 1<sup>st</sup> Book. I left Haydon and the next day received a letter from him, proposing to make, as he says with all his might, a finished Chalk sketch of my head, to be engraved in the first style and put at the head of my Poem, saying at the same time he had never done the thing for any human being, and that it must have considerable effect as he will put the name to it. I begin to day to copy my 2<sup>nd</sup> Book—"thus far into the bowels of the Land"<sup>2</sup>—You shall hear whether it will be Quarto or non Quarto, picture or non Picture. Leigh Hunt I showed my 1<sup>st</sup> Book to, he allows it not much merit as a whole; says it is unnatural and made ten objections to it in the mere skimming over. He says the conversation is unnatural and too high-flown for Brother and Sister. Says it should be simple forgetting do ye mind that they are both overshadowed by a Supernatural Power, and of force could

<sup>1</sup> See Letter 39, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> 'Richard III', v. ii. 3.

not speak like Franchesca in the Rimini. He must first prove that Caliban's poetry is unnatural,—This with me completely overturns his objections—the fact is he and Shelley are hurt, and perhaps justly, at my not having showed them the affair officiously—and from several hints I have had they appear much disposed to dissect and anatomize, any trip or slip I may have made.—But who's afraid? Ay! Tom! demme if I am. I went last Tuesday, an hour too late, to Hazlitt's Lecture on poetry, got there just as they were coming out, when all these pounced upon me—Hazlitt, John Hunt and Son, Wells, Bewick, all the Landseers,<sup>1</sup> Bob Harris, Rox<sup>1</sup> of the Burrough aye and more; the Landseers enquired after you particularly—I know not whether Wordsworth has left town—But Sunday I dined with Hazlitt and Haydon, also that I took Haslam with me—I dined with Brown lately. Dilke having taken the Champion Theatricals<sup>2</sup> was obliged to be in town. Fanny has returned to Walthamstow—Mr Abbey appeared very glum the last time I went to see her, and said in an indirect way that I had no business there—Rice has been ill, but has been mending much lately—

I think a little change has taken place in my intellect lately—I cannot bear to be uninterested or unemployed, I, who for so long a time have been addicted to passiveness. Nothing is finer for the purposes of great productions than a very gradual ripening of the intellectual powers. As an instance of this—observe—I sat down yesterday to read "King Lear" once again the thing appeared to demand the prologue of a Sonnet. I wrote it and began to read<sup>3</sup>—(I know you would like to see it.)

"On sitting down to <read> King Lear once again"

O golden tongued Romance with serene Lute!

Fair-plumed Syren! Queen of<sup>4</sup> far-away! *Just*

Leave melodizing on this wintry day,

Shut up thine olden volume and be mute.

<sup>1</sup> 'All the Landseers' would include John (1769–1852) and his sons, Thomas (1795–1880), Charles (1799–1879), and Edwin (1802–73). George and Richard Rokes were undertakers in the Borough. Thomas Landseer published 'The Life and Letters of William Bewick' in 1871.

<sup>2</sup> Thus there would seem to have been no fewer than three dramatic critics for the 'Champion' newspaper within a few weeks.

<sup>3</sup> It is boldly written in a large blank space in the 1808 Shakespeare folio now in the Dilke Collection at Hampstead.

<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey wrote *of* and altered it to *if*.

Adieu! for once again the fierce dispute,  
 Betwixt Hell torment and impassion'd Clay  
 Must I burn through; once more assay  
 The bitter Sweet of this Shakespeareian fruit.  
 Chief Poet! and ye clouds of Albion,  
 Begetters of our deep eternal theme,  
 When I am through the old oak forest gone  
 Let me not wander in a barren dream  
 But when I am consumed with the Fire  
 Give me new Phoenix-wings<sup>1</sup> to fly at my desire

So you see I am getting at it, with a sort of determination and strength, though verily I do not feel it at this moment—this is my fourth letter this morning, and I feel rather tired, and my head rather swimming—so I will leave it open till to-morrow's post—

I am in the habit of taking my papers to Dilke's and copying there; so I chat and proceed at the same time. I have been there at my work this evening, and the walk over the Heath<sup>2</sup> takes off all sleep, so I will even proceed with you—I left off short in my last, just as I began an account of a private theatrical—Well it was of the lowest order, all greasy and oily, insomuch that if they had lived in olden times, when signs were hung over the doors; the only appropriate one for that oily place would have been—a guttered Candle—They played John Bull, The Review—and it was to conclude with Bombastes Furioso<sup>3</sup>—I saw from a Box the 1<sup>st</sup> Act of John Bull,<sup>4</sup> then I went to Drury and did not return till it was over—when by Wells's interest we got behind the scenes—there was not a yard wide all the way round for actors, scene-shifters and interlopers to move in; for 'Nota Bene' the Green Room was under the stage and there was I threatened over and over again to be turned out by the oily scene-shifters—There did I hear a little painted Trollop own, very candidly, that she had failed in Mary, with a "damned if she'd play a serious part again, as long as she lived", and at the same time she was habited as the Quaker in the Review—There was a quarrel, and a fat good-natured looking girl in soldiers' Clothes wished she had only been a man for

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey wrote 'Phoenix-wings'.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably the walk from Wentworth Place to Well Walk.

<sup>3</sup> Burlesque by William Barnes Rhodes (1772-1826).

<sup>4</sup> By George Colman the younger (1762-1836).

Tom's sake—One fellow began a song but an unlucky finger-point from the Gallery sent him off like a shot, one chap was dressed to kill for the King in Bombastes, and he stood at the edge of the scene in the very sweat of anxiety to show himself, but Alas the thing was not played. The sweetest morsel of the night<sup>1</sup> moreover was, that the Musicians began pegging and fagging away at an overture—never did you see faces more in earnest, three times did they play it over, dropping all kinds of correctness and still did not the curtain draw up—Well then they went into a country-dance, then into a region they well knew, into their old boonsome Pothouse, and then to see how pompous o' the sudden they turned; how they looked about and chatted; how they did not care a damn; was a great treat—

I hope I have not tired you by this filling up of the dash in my last,—Constable, the bookseller, has offered Reynolds ten guineas a sheet to write for his Magazine—it is an Edinburgh one which Blackwood's started up in opposition to. Hunt said he was nearly sure that the 'Cockney School' was written by Scott<sup>2</sup> so you are right Tom!—There are no more little bits of news I can remember at present

I remain,  
My dear Brothers, Your very affectionate Brother  
John

42. To JOHN TAYLOR. Friday 30 Jan. 1818.

Address: John Taylor Esq<sup>re</sup> | 91 New Bond Street.

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 30 JA 1818.

Friday

My dear Taylor,

These Lines, as they now stand, about Happiness have rung in my ears like a 'chime a mending'.<sup>3</sup> See here,

Behold  
Wherein Lies happiness Pœona? fold—

<sup>1</sup> '2 Henry IV', II. iv. 401.

<sup>2</sup> C. W. Dilke notes that it was written by Lockhart, 'which is so close akin that it is by no means impossible that Scott encouraged the thing. That Lockhart was the writer was admitted to an American who published it on his return.' There is, however, no evidence to justify the association of Scott's name with the objectionable tirades.

<sup>3</sup> 'Troilus and Cressida', I. iii. 159.

This appears to me the very contrary of blessed. I hope this will appear to you more eligible.

Wherein lies Happiness? In that which becks  
Our ready Minds to fellowship divine;  
A fellowship with essence, till we shine  
Full alchymized and free of space. Behold  
The clear Religion of heaven—fold. &c—<sup>1</sup>

You must indulge me by putting this in for setting aside the badness of the other, such a preface is necessary to the subject. The whole thing must I think have appeared to you, who are a consecutive Man, as a thing almost of mere words—but I assure you that when I wrote it it was a regular stepping of the Imagination towards a Truth. My having written that ~~Passage~~ Argument will perhaps be of the greatest Service to me of any thing I ever did. It set before me at once the gradations of Happiness even like a kind of Pleasure Thermometer—and is my first Step towards the chief attempt in the Drama—the playing of different Natures with Joy and Sorrow.

Do me this favor and believe me,  
Your sincere friend  
John Keats

I hope your next Work will be of a more general Interest—I suppose you cogitate a little about it now and then.

43. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Saturday 31 Jan. 1818.*

*Address:* Mr J. H. Reynolds | Little Brittain | Christs Hospital.  
*Postmark:* 31 JA 1818.

Hampstead Saturday

My Dear Reynolds

I have parcel'd out this day for Letter Writing—more resolved thereon because your Letter will come as a re-

<sup>1</sup> See 'Endymion'; Book I, line 777 et seq. For the postscript, see under 'Taylor and Hessey' in the Biographical Memoranda.

43. Lord Houghton says—'Keats passed the winter of 1817-18 at Hampstead, gaily enough among his friends; his society was much sought after, from the delightful combination of earnestness and pleasantry which distinguished his intercourse with all men. There was no effort about him to say fine things, but he did say them more effectively, and they gained considerably by his happy transition of manner. He joked well or ill, as it happened, and with a laugh which still echoes sweetly in many ears; but at the mention of oppression or wrong, or at any calumny against those he

freshment and will have (sic parvis &c.) the same effect as a Kiss in certain situations where people become over-generous. I have read this first sentence over, and think it savours rather; however an inward innocence is like a nested dove; or as the old song says.

## 1

O blush not so, O blush not so  
or I shall think ye knowing;  
And if ye smile, the blushing while,  
Then Maidenheads are going.

## 2

There's a blush for wont, and a blush for shan't  
And a blush for having done it,  
There's a blush for thought, and a blush for naught  
And a blush for just begun it.

## 3

O sigh not so, O sigh not so  
For it sounds of Eve's sweet pip(p)in.  
By those loosen'd Lips, you have tasted the pips  
And fought in an amorous nipping.

## 4

Will ye play once more, at nice cut core  
For it only will last our youth out,  
And we have the prime of the Kissing time  
We have not one sweet tooth out.

## 5

There's a sigh for yes, and a sigh for no,  
And a sigh for "I can't bear it"—  
O what can be done, shall we stay or run  
O cut the sweet apple and share it.

Now I purposed to write to you a serious poetical Letter, but I find that a maxim I met with the other day is a just one "On cause mieux quand on ne dit pas *causons*" I was

loved, he rose into grave manliness at once, and seemed like a tall man. His habitual gentleness made his occasional looks of indignation almost terrible: on one occasion, when a gross falsehood respecting the young artist Severn was repeated and dwelt upon, he left the room, declaring "he should be ashamed to sit with men who could utter and believe such things".



hindered however from my first intention by a mere muslin Handkerchief very neatly pinned—but “Hence vain deluding &c.”<sup>1</sup> Yet I cannot write in prose, It is a sun-shiny day and I cannot so here goes,

Hence Burgundy, Claret & Port,  
 Away with old Hock and Madeira  
 Too couthly<sup>2</sup> ye are for my sport  
 There's a beverage brighter and clearer.  
 Instead of a pitiful rummer  
 My Wine overbrims a whole Summer  
 My bowl is the sky  
 And I drink at my eye  
 Till I feel in the brain  
 A delphian pain—  
 Then follow my Caius then follow  
 On the Green of the Hill  
 We will drink our fill  
 Of golden sunshine  
 Till our brains intertwine  
 With the glory and grace of Apollo!

---

God of the Meridian  
 And of the East and West  
 To thee my soul is flown  
 And my body is earthward press'd—  
 It is an awful mission  
 A terrible division  
 And leaves a gulph austere  
 To be filled with worldly fear.  
 Aye, when the Soul is fled  
 To high above our head,  
 Affrighted do we gaze  
 After its airy maze—  
 As doth a Mother wild,  
 When her young infant child  
 Is in an eagle's claws—  
 And is not this the cause  
 Of Madness? God of Song  
 Thou bearest me along

<sup>1</sup> Milton's 'Il Penseroso', l. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Woodhouse Transcript II, 'courtly': Brown Transcript, 'earthly'.

Through sights I scarce can bear .  
 O let me, let me share  
 With the hot Lyre and thee,  
 The staid Philosophy.  
 Temper my lonely hours,  
 And let me see thy bow'rs  
 More unalarm'd!—

My Dear Reynolds, you must forgive all this ranting—  
 but the fact is, I cannot write sense this Morning—how-  
 ever you shall have some. I will copy my last Sonnet.

When I have fears that I may cease to be  
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,  
 Before high piled Books in charactery  
 Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain—  
 When I behold upon the night's starr'd face  
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
 And feel that I may never live to trace  
 Their shadows with the magic hand of chance:  
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,  
 That I shall never look upon thee more  
 Never have relish in the fairy power  
 Of unreflecting Love: then on the Shore  
 Of the wide world I stand alone and think  
 Till Love and Fame to Nothingness do sink.—

I must take a turn, and then write to Teignmouth.  
 Remember me to all, not excepting yourself.

Your sincere friend,  
 John Keats.

44. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Tuesday 3  
 Feb. 1818.*

*Address and postmark not recorded.*

Hampstead, Tuesday.

My dear Reynolds,

I thank you for your dish of Filberts—Would I could  
 get a basket of them by way of des(s)ert every day for the  
 sum of two-pence<sup>1</sup>—Would we were a sort of ethereal Pigs,

<sup>1</sup> Two sonnets on Robin Hood, sent by the 'twopenny post'—afterwards  
 printed in 'The Yellow Dwarf' for the 21st of February, 1818, p. 64, with

and turn'd loose to feed upon spiritual Mast and Acorns—which would be merely being a squirrel and feed(ing) upon filberts, for what is a squirrel but an airy pig, or a filbert but a sort of archangelical acorn. About the nuts being worth cracking, all I can say is that where there are a throng of delightful Images ready drawn simplicity is the only thing. The first is the best on account of the first line, and the “arrow—foil'd of its antler'd food”, and moreover (and this is the only word or two I find fault with, the more because<sup>1</sup> I have had so much reason to shun it as a quicksand) the last has “tender and true”.<sup>2</sup> We must cut this, and not be rattlesnaked into any more

a third sonnet addressed ‘to E—, with the foregoing Sonnets’, and in ‘The Garden of Florence’ (1821). They are as follows:—

## 1.

The trees in Sherwood forest are old and good,—  
The grass beneath them now is dimly green;  
Are they deserted all? Is no young mien  
With loose-slung bugle met within the wood:  
No arrow found,—foil'd of its antler'd food,—  
Struck in the oak's rude side? Is there nought seen,  
To mark the revelries which there have been,—  
In the sweet days of merry Robin Hood?

Go there, with Summer, and with evening,—go  
In the soft shadows like some wandering man,—  
And thou shalt far amid the forest know  
The archer men in green, with belt and bow,  
Feasting on pheasant, river-fowl, and swan,  
With Robin at their head, and Marian.

## 2.

With coat of Lincoln green and mantle too,  
And horn of ivory mouth, and buckle bright,  
And arrows wing'd with peacock-feathers light,  
And trusty bow well gather'd of the yew,—  
Stands Robin Hood:—and near, with eyes of blue  
Shining through dusk hair, like the stars of night,  
And habited in pretty forest plight,—  
His green-wood beauty sits, tender and true.

Oh gentle-tressed girl! Maid Marian!  
Are thine eyes bent upon the gallant game  
That stray in the merry Sherwood: thy sweet fame  
Can never, never die. And thou, high man,  
Would we might pledge thee with thy silver Can  
Of Rhenish, in the woods of Nottingham!

<sup>1</sup> Woodhouse has ‘become’.

<sup>2</sup> Replaced by ‘young as the dew’ on revision.

of the like—It may be said that we ought to read our Contemporaries—that Wordsworth &c. should have their due from us. But, for the sake of a few fine imaginative or domestic passages, are we to be bullied into a certain Philosophy engendered in the whims of an Egotist—Every man has his speculations, but every man does not brood and peacock over them till he makes a false coinage and deceives himself. Many a man can travel to the very bourne of Heaven, and yet want confidence to put down his half-seeing. Sancho will invent a Journey heavenward as well as any body. We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us—and if we do not agree, seems to put its hand in its breeches pocket. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject.—How beautiful are the retired flowers! how would they lose their beauty were they to throng into the highway crying out, "admire me I am a violet!—dote upon me I am a primrose!" Modern poets differ from the Elizabethans in this. Each of the moderns like an Elector of Hanover governs his petty state, and knows how many straws are swept daily from the Causeways in all his dominions and has a continual itching that all the Housewives should have their coppers well scoured: the antients were Emperors of vast Provinces, they had only heard of the remote ones and scarcely cared to visit them.—I will cut all this—I will have no more of Wordsworth or Hunt in particular—Why should we be of the tribe of Manasseh, when we can wander with Esau? why should we kick against the Pricks, when we can walk on Roses? Why should we be owls, when we can be Eagles? Why be teased with "nice Eyed wagtails",<sup>1</sup> when we have in sight "the Cherub Contemplation"?<sup>2</sup>—Why with Wordsworth's "Matthew with a bough of wilding in his hand"<sup>3</sup> when we can have Jacques "under an oak &c."?<sup>4</sup>—The secret of the Bough of Wilding will run through your head faster than I can write it—Old Matthew spoke to him some years ago on some nothing, and because he happens in an Evening Walk to imagine the figure of the Old Man—he must

<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt, 'The Nymphs', ii. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Milton, 'Il Penseroso', l. 54.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Two April Mornings', ll. 59, 60.

<sup>4</sup> 'As You Like It', ii. i. 31.

stamp it down in black and white, and it is henceforth sacred—I don't mean to deny Wordsworth's grandeur and Hunt's merit, but I mean to say we need not be teased with grandeur and merit when we can have them uncontaminated and unobtrusive.<sup>1</sup> Let us have the old Poets, and robin Hood. Your letter and its sonnets gave me more pleasure than will the 4<sup>th</sup> Book of Childe Harold<sup>2</sup> and the whole of anybody's life and opinions. In return for your Dish of filberts, I have gathered a few Catkins, I hope they'll look pretty.

To J. H. R. In answer to his Robin Hood Sonnets.

No! those days are gone away,  
And their hours are old and grey,  
And their Minutes buried all  
Under the down-trodden pall  
Of the leaves of many years.  
Many times have Winter's sheers,  
Frozen North and chilling East,  
Sounded Tempests to the feast  
Of the Forest's whispering fleeces,  
Since men paid no rent and Leases.

No, the Bugle sounds no more,  
And the twanging bow no more;  
Silent is the ivory shrill  
Past the heath and up the Hill:  
There is no mid forest laugh,  
Where lone Echo gives the half  
To some wight amaz'd to hear  
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June  
You may go with Sun or Moon,  
Or the seven stars to light you,  
Or the polar ray to right you;  
But you never may behold  
Little John or Robin bold;

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, as Lord Houghton suggested, Keats was unconsciously swayed in his estimate of Wordsworth at this moment by an incident which had occurred at Haydon's. Keats had been induced to repeat the 'Hymn to Pan', out of 'Endymion', which Shelley, who did not much like the poem, used to speak of as affording the 'surest promise of ultimate excellence'; Wordsworth only remarked, 'it was a pretty piece of Paganism'.

<sup>2</sup> 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto the Fourth' was published on the 28th of April 1818.

Never one of all the Clan  
 Thrumming on an empty can  
 Some old hunting ditty, while  
 He doth his green way beguile  
 To fair Hostess' Merriment  
 Down beside the pasture Trent,  
 For he left the merry tale,  
 Messenger to spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din,  
 Gone the song of Gamelyn,  
 Gone the tough-belted outlaw  
 Idling in the 'grenè shawe'<sup>1</sup>:  
 All are gone away and past!  
 And if Robin *should be* cast  
 Sudden from his turfed grave;  
 And if Marian *should have*  
 Once again her forest days;  
 She would weep, and he would craze:  
 He would swear, for all his oaks,  
 Fallen beneath the Dock-yard-strokes,  
 Have rotted on the briny seas:  
 She would weep that her wild bees  
 Sang not to her—'Strange that honey  
 Can't be got without hard money'.

So it is: yet let us sing,  
 Honor to the old bow-string,  
 Honor to the Bugle horn,  
 Honor to the woods unshorn,  
 Honor to the Lincoln green,  
 Honor to the archer keen,  
 Honor to tight little John,  
 And the horse he rode upon;  
 Honor to bold Robin Hood  
 Sleeping in the underwood,  
 Honor to maid Marian,  
 And to all the Sherwood-clan—  
 Though their days have hurried by  
 Let us two a burden try.

I hope you will like them—they are at least written in  
 the Spirit of Outlawry—Here are the Mermaid lines.

Souls of poets dead and gone,  
 What Elysium have ye known,

<sup>1</sup> Chaucer, 'The Freres Tale', l. 1386.

Happy field, or mossy cavern,  
Fairer than the Mermaid Tavern?

Have ye tippled drink more fine  
Than mine Host's Canary wine?  
Or are fruits of Paradise  
Sweeter than those dainty pies  
Of Venison. O generous food  
Dress'd as though bold Robin Hood  
Would with his Maid Marian  
Sup, and bouze from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day  
Mine host's sign-board flew away,  
Nobody knew whither, till  
An Astrologer's old quill  
To a sheepskin gave the story;  
Says he saw you in your glory  
Underneath a new old sign  
Sipping beverage divine,  
And pledging with contented smack  
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,  
Are the winds a sweeter home,  
Richer is uncellar'd cavern  
Than the merry Mermaid Tavern?

I will call on you at 4 to-morrow and we will trudge together for it is not the thing to be a stranger in the Land of Harpsicols.<sup>1</sup> I hope also to bring you my 2<sup>d</sup> book.<sup>2</sup> In the hope that these Scribblings will be some amusement for you this evening—I remain copying on the Hill

Y<sup>r</sup> sincere friend and Co-scribbler,  
John Keats.

45. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Thursday* (5 Feb. 1818).

*No address or postmark.*

Thursday Morning

My dear Haydon,

I was at Reynolds's when he received your Letter and am therefore up to Probabilities—The fact is Reynolds is

<sup>1</sup> A corrupt form of Harpsichord. Perhaps an evening at the Novellos' was projected. Cf. Letter 10, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Of 'Endymion'.

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Letter 47

very unwell—he has all kinds of distressing Symptoms, and I am on this account rather glad that he has not spare time for one of our right Sort meetings—he would go to(o) far for his health.

I was right glad of your Letter from Devonshire—whereby that is I hope one day to see it—right sorry that you are going back to day. I hope 'tis not for long—I met a friend the other day who had seen Wordsworth's House the other Week—You will be glad to hear that I have finished my second Book<sup>1</sup> that is if this catches you at your Street-door—I have been gadding and did not see your Note<sup>2</sup> time to answer it sooner. Let me hear from Devon again—

Your's like a Pyramid

John Keats—

My Brother George desires to be remembe(r)ed to you—

46. To JOHN TAYLOR. *Thursday 5 Feb. 1818.*

*Address:* John Taylor Esq<sup>re</sup> | 91 New Bond Street.

*Postmark:* 5 FE 1818.

Fleet Street Thurs. Morn

My dear Taylor,

I have finish'd copying my Second Book<sup>1</sup> but I want it for one day to overlook it—and moreover this day I have very particular employ in the affair of Cripps—so I trespass on your indulgence and take advantage of your good nature.

You shall hear from me or see me soon. I will tell Reynolds of your engagement—tomorrow.

Your's unfeignedly

John Keats—

47. To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS. *Saturday 14 Feb. 1818.*

*Address:* Messrs. Keats Teignmouth Devon.

*Postmark not recorded.*

Hampstead Saturday Night.<sup>3</sup>

My dear Brothers

When once a man delays a letter beyond the proper

<sup>1</sup> Of 'Endymion'.

<sup>2</sup> Keats first wrote 'Notn' for 'Note in', then over-wrote the 'n' with an 'e' and forgot to write 'in' after it. It is altogether a hastily written letter and bears signs of a spluttering quill.

<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey has below this *February 16, 1819* with 9 struck out and replaced by 8.



time, he delays it longer for one or two reasons; first, because he must begin in a very commonplace style, that is to say, with an excuse; and secondly things and circumstances become so jumbled in his mind, that he knows not what, or what not, he has said in his last—I shall visit you as soon as I have copied my poem all out, I am now much beforehand with the printer, they have done none yet, and I am half afraid they will let half the season by before the printing, I am determined they shall not trouble me when I have copied it all—Horace Smith has lent me his manuscript called “Nehemiah Muggs, an exposure of the Methodists” perhaps I may send you a few extracts.<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt’s last Lecture was on Thompson<sup>2</sup> Cowper and Crabbe, he praised Cowper and Thomson, but he gave Crabbe an unmerciful licking. I think Hunt’s article of Fazio—no it was not, but I saw Fazio the first night, it hung rather heavily on me<sup>3</sup>—I am in the high way of being introduced to a squad of people, Peter Pindar, M<sup>rs</sup> Opie—M<sup>rs</sup> Scott—M<sup>r</sup> Robinson a great friend of Coleridge’s called on me—Richards tell(s) me that my Poems are known in the West Country and that he saw a very clever copy of verses, headed with a Motto from my Sonnet to George—Honors rush so thickly upon me that I shall not be able to bear up against them. What think you, am I to be crowned in the Capitol. Am I to be made a Mandarin—No! I am to be invited, M<sup>rs</sup> Hunt tells me, to a party at Ollier’s to keep Shakespeare’s birthday—Shakespeare would stare to see me there<sup>4</sup>—The Wednesday before last Shelley, Hunt and I wrote each a Sonnet

<sup>1</sup> These were actually sent on a loose sheet enclosed with this letter—according to Jeffrey, who copies Keats’s selection of ten passages—54 lines in all. Smith’s satire was afterwards printed in the ‘London Magazine’, January, March, June, 1821.

<sup>2</sup> *Thompson* for *Thomson* occurs again in Letter 123, p. 314.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Fazio’, by Henry Hart Milman (1791–1868), produced at Covent Garden on the 5th of February, 1818. In Letter 55, p. 117, Keats says that ‘Millman has damned the old drama’. Whether Keats made the acquaintance of Dr. Wolcot (‘Peter Pindar’) and Mrs. Opie, I do not know. Of Mrs. Scott he did, see Haydon’s letter, p. 119, and George’s, p. 120. Coleridge’s friend was of course Henry Crabb Robinson; but I do not find in his published diary any mention of the visit.

<sup>4</sup> Shakespeare’s reason for staring may be found in the following letter from Messrs. Ollier addressed to ‘M<sup>r</sup> G Keats 62 Broad St Cheapside’, first printed in ‘The Athenæum’ for June 7, 1873:

3 Welbeck St 29<sup>th</sup> April 1817

Sir,—We regret that your brother ever requested us to publish his book, or that our opinion of its talent should have led us to acquiesce in under-

on the River Nile, some day you shall read them all. I saw a sheet of *Endymion*, and have all reason to suppose they will soon get it done, there shall be nothing wanting on my part. I have been writing at intervals many songs and Sonnets, and I long to be at Teignmouth, to read them over to you: however I think I had better wait till this Book is off my mind; it will not be long first.

Reynolds has been writing two very capital articles in the *Yellow Dwarf* on Popular Preachers<sup>1</sup>—All the talk here is about Dr. Croft the Duke of Devon &c<sup>2</sup>

Your most affectionate Brother  
John

48. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Thursday 19 Feb. 1818.*

*Address:* not recorded.

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 19 FEB 1818.

My dear Reynolds,

I had an idea that a Man might pass a very pleasant life in this manner—let him on a certain day read a certain

taking it. We are, however, much obliged to you for relieving us from the unpleasant necessity of declining any further connexion with it which we must have done, as we think the curiosity is satisfied and the sale has dropped.—By far the greater number of Persons who have purchased it from us have found fault with it in such plain terms, that we have in many cases offer'd to take the book back rather than be annoyed with the ridicule which has, time after time, been shower'd on it.—In fact it was only on Saturday last that we were under the mortification of having our own opinion of it's merits flatly contradicted by a Gentleman who told us he considered it "no better than a take in".—

These are unpleasant imputations for any one in business to labour under, but we should have borne them and concealed their existence from you had not the stile of your note shewn us that such delicacy would be quite thrown away. We shall take means without delay for ascertaining the number of copies on hand, & you shall be informed accordingly.

We are

Your most obed<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>ts</sup>

C & J Ollier

The holograph of this letter is now in the Keats Museum, Hampstead.

<sup>1</sup> Four articles entitled 'Pulpit Oratory' appeared in 'The Yellow Dwarf' for February the 7th, 14th and 28th and April the 4th; they are signed 'Caius'.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Richard Croft (1762–1818): accoucheur; attended the Duchess of Devonshire; accused of negligence in connexion with the Princess Charlotte's accouchement, 1817; shot himself on the 12th of February 1818. There had been a foolish rumour that the Duchess of Devonshire gave birth to a girl who was then exchanged for a boy; and Croft's suicide set this rumour afloat once more.

Page of full Poesy or distilled Prose, and let him wander with it, and muse upon it, and reflect upon it, and bring home to it, and prophesy upon it, and dream upon it, until it becomes stale—but when will it do so? Never. When Man has arrived at a certain ripeness in intellect any one grand and spiritual passage serves him as a starting-post towards all “the two-and-thirty Palaces”.<sup>1</sup> How happy is such a voyage of conception, what delicious diligent Indolence!<sup>2</sup> A doze upon a sofa does not hinder it, and a nap upon Clover engenders ethereal finger-pointings—the prattle of a child gives it wings, and the converse of middle-age a strength to beat them—a strain of music conducts to “an odd angle of the Isle”,<sup>3</sup> and when the leaves whisper it puts a girdle round the earth.<sup>4</sup> Nor will this sparing touch of noble Books be any irreverence to their Writers—for perhaps the honors paid by Man to Man are trifles in comparison to the Benefit done by great Works to the Spirit and pulse of good<sup>5</sup> by their mere passive existence. Memory should not be called knowledge. Many have original minds who do not think it—they are led away by Custom. Now it appears to me that almost any Man may like the spider spin from his own inwards his own airy Citadel—the points of leaves and twigs on which the spider begins her work are few, and she fills the air with a beautiful circuiting. Man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine Web of his Soul, and weave a tapestry empyrean full of symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wandering, of distinctness for his luxury. But the Minds of Mortals are so different and bent on such diverse journeys that it may at first appear impossible for any common taste and fellowship to exist between two or three under these suppositions. It is however quite the contrary. Minds would leave each other in contrary directions, traverse each other in numberless points, and at last greet each other at the journey’s end. An old Man and a child would talk together and the old Man be led on his path and the child left thinking. Man should not dispute or assert but whisper

<sup>1</sup> The thirty-two ‘places of delight’ of the Buddhist doctrine.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 123, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Tempest’, I. ii. 223.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Midsummer-Night’s Dream’, II. i. 175.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. ‘The Old Cumberland Beggar’, I. 77.

results to his neighbour and thus by every germ of spirit sucking the sap from mould ethereal every human<sup>1</sup> might become great, and Humanity instead of being a wide heath of Furze<sup>2</sup> and Briars with here and there a remote Oak or Pine, would become a grand democracy of Forest Trees! It has been an old comparison for our urging on—the Beehive; however, it seems to me that we should rather be the flower than the Bee—for it is a false notion that more is gained by receiving than giving—no, the receiver and the giver are equal in their benefits. The flower, I doubt not, receives a fair guerdon from the Bee—its leaves blush deeper in the next spring—and who shall say between Man and Woman which is the most delighted? Now it is more noble to sit like Jove than to fly like Mercury—let us not therefore go hurrying about and collecting honey, bee-like buzzing here and there impatiently from a knowledge of what is to be aimed at; but let us open our leaves like a flower and be passive and receptive—budding patiently under the eye of Apollo and taking hints from every noble insect that favours us with a visit—sap will be given us for meat and dew for drink. I was led into these thoughts, my dear Reynolds, by the beauty of the morning operating on a sense of Idleness—I have not read any Books—the Morning said I was right—I had no idea but of the morning, and the thrush said I was right—seeming to say,

O thou whose face hath felt the Winter's wind,<sup>3</sup>  
 Whose eye has seen the snow-clouds hung in mist,  
 And the black elm-tops 'mong the freezing stars,  
 To thee the Spring will be a harvest-time.  
 O thou, whose only book has been the light  
 Of supreme darkness which thou feddest on  
 Night after night when Phœbus was away,  
 To thee the Spring shall be a triple morn.  
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none,  
 And yet my song comes native with the warmth.  
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none,

<sup>1</sup> Keats may have used this adjective as a noun; or he may have left out the word *being* accidentally. He certainly uses it as a noun in line 4 of the 'extempore' he sent to America in Letter 123 (p. 320):

'For Faeries be as humans lovers true.'

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Tempest', I. i. 71-2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'As You Like It', II. i. 7.

And yet the Evening listens. He who saddens  
At thought of idleness cannot be idle,  
And he's awake who thinks himself asleep.

Now I am sensible all this is a mere sophistication (however it may neighbour to any truths), to excuse my own indolence—so I will not deceive myself that Man should be equal with Jove—but think himself very well off as a sort of scullion-Mercury, or even a humble Bee. It is no matter whether I am right or wrong, either one way or another, if there is sufficient to lift a little time from your shoulders.

Your affectionate friend  
John Keats—

49. To HORACE SMITH. *Thursday 19 Feb. 1818.*

*Address:* Horace Smith Esq<sup>re</sup> | Knightsbridge

*Postmark:* HAMPSTEAD; no date.

Hampstead Thursd: Morn.

My dear Sir,

My Brothers are expecting me every day in devonshire, and I have some days work before I can go thither: so I am hardy enough to nullify the day I had expected to pass with you, and trespassing enough to ask your indulgence therefore—

I am being greatly amused with your Poem<sup>1</sup>—it has a full leven of Wit and imaginative fun. I thank you for it now and will return it to Reynolds. Remember me to Shelley and Kingston.

Your's very sincerely  
John Keats

50. To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS. *Saturday 21 Feb. 1818.*

*Address:* Messrs. Keats Teignmouth Dover<sup>2</sup>

*Postmark:* not recorded.

Hampstead, Saturday.  
February 21<sup>st</sup>. 1818—

My dear Brothers

I am extremely sorry to have given you so much uneasiness by not writing, however you know good news is no news or vice versâ. I do not like to write a short letter to

<sup>1</sup> 'Nehemiah Muggs'. See letter 47, p. 100 and n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Probably a mistake of the transcriber, John Jeffrey.

you, or you would have had one long before. The weather although boisterous to-day has been very much milder; and I think Devonshire is not the last place to receive a temperate Change. I have been abominably idle since you left, but have just turned over a new leaf, and used as a marker a letter of excuse to an invitation from Horace Smith. The occasion of my writing to-day is the enclosed letter, by Postmark from Miss W(ylie). Does she expect you in town George? I received a letter the other day from Haydon, in which he says, his *Essays on the Elgin Marbles* are being translated into Italian, the which he superintends. I did not mention that I had seen the *British Gallery*, there are some nice things by Stark,<sup>1</sup> and *Bathsheba* by Wilkie, which is condemned.<sup>2</sup> I could not bear Alston's<sup>3</sup> *Uriel*.

Reynolds has been very ill for some time, confined to the house, and had leeches applied to the chest; when I saw him on Wednesday he was much the same, and he is in the worst place in the world for amendment, among the strife of women's tongues, in a hot and parch'd room: I wish he would move to Butler's<sup>4</sup> for a short time. The Thrushes and Blackbirds have ben singing me into an idea that it was Spring, and almost that leaves were on the trees. So that black clouds and boisterous winds seem to have mustered and collected to full Divan, for the purpose of convincing me to the contrary. Taylor says my poem shall be out in a month, I think he will be out before it.<sup>5</sup> — — —

The thrushes are singing now as if they would speak to the winds, because their big brother Jack, the Spring, was

<sup>1</sup> The exhibition was opened on Monday the 2nd of February. James Stark (1794-1859): the pictures Keats saw were 'Penning the Flock' and 'Lambeth, looking towards Westminster Bridge' for which the Directors of the British Institution awarded Stark a premium of £50; Sir David Wilkie (1785-1841); Washington Allston (1779-1843), resident in London 1811-18; 'Uriel' was exhibited with another painting and Allston was awarded £150 by the Directors of the British Institution; it was bought by the Marquess of Stafford for 150 guineas, and is reproduced in 'The Life and Letters of Washington Allston', by J. B. Flagg (Bentley, 1893).

<sup>2</sup> In 'The Champion', 15th of February 1818, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey reads *Leslies* corrected to *Alston's* in the margin.

<sup>4</sup> As he did later, see Letter 63, p. 135. Charles Butler had been a Surgeon's Pupil at Guy's, having entered on the 30th of September 1815, a day before Keats. He passed the Apothecaries' Society's examination at the same time as the poet, i.e. on the 25th of July 1816. Mrs. Butler was related to Eliza Powell Drewe who married John Hamilton Reynolds on the 31st of August 1822.

<sup>5</sup> See Letter 42, p. 90, and Biographical Memoranda.

not far off. I am reading Voltaire and Gibbon, although I wrote to Reynolds the other day to prove reading of no use; I have not seen Hunt since, I am a good deal with Dilke and Brown, we are very thick; they are very kind to me, they are well. I don't think I could stop in Hampstead but for their neighbourhood. I hear Hazlitt's lectures regularly, his last was on Gray, Collins, Young, &c., and he gave a very fine piece of discriminating Criticism on Swift, Voltaire, and Rabelais. I was very disappointed at his treatment of Chatterton. I generally meet with many I know there. Lord Byron's 4<sup>th</sup> Canto<sup>1</sup> is expected out, and I heard somewhere, that Walter Scott has a new Poem in readiness. I am sorry that Wordsworth has left a bad impression where-ever he visited in town by his egotism, Vanity, and bigotry. Yet he is a great poet if not a philosopher. I have not yet read Shelly's Poem,<sup>2</sup> I don't suppose you have it yet, at the Teignmouth libraries. These double letters must come rather heavy, I hope you have a moderate portion of cash, but don't fret at all, if you have not—Lord! I intend to play at Cut and run as well as Falstaff, that is to say, before he got so lusty.

I remain praying for your health my dear Brothers  
Your Affectionate Brother.

John—

51. To JOHN TAYLOR. *Friday 27 Feb. (1818).*

Address: John Faylor Esq<sup>re</sup> | New bond Street

No postmark.

Hampstead 27 Feby—  
~~London F~~

My dear Taylor,

Your alteration strikes me as being a great improvement—the page looks much better. And now I will attend to the Punctuations you speak of—the comma should be at *soberly*,<sup>3</sup> and in the other passage the comma should follow *quiet*,<sup>4</sup>. I am extremely indebted to you for this attention and also for your after admonitions—It is a sorry thing for

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 44, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Revolt of Islam' (see note 3 to Letter 32, p. 71).

<sup>3</sup> 51. Keats began this letter by writing 'London F', which he struck out and wrote 'Hampstead' and the date above it. Perhaps he intended originally to write 'London Friday', the 27th of February being a Friday. He can hardly have written 'Faylor' in the address, nor 'natural natural too' in lines 12 and 13, p. 107, intentionally.

<sup>4</sup> 'Endymion', i. 149.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 247.

me that any one should have to overcome Prejudices in reading my Verses—that affects me more than any hyper-criticism on any particular Passage. In *Endymion* I have most likely but moved into the Go-cart from the leading strings. In Poetry I have a few Axioms, and you will see how far I am from their Centre. 1<sup>st</sup>. I think Poetry should surprise by a fine excess and not by Singularity—it should strike the Reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a Remembrance—2<sup>nd</sup>. Its touches of Beauty should never be half way ther(e)by making the reader breathless instead of content: the rise, the progress, the setting of imagery should like the Sun come natural natural too him—shine over him and set soberly although in magnificence leaving him in the Luxury of twilight—but it is easier to think what Poetry should be than to write it—and this leads me on to another axiom. That if Poetry comes not as naturally as the Leaves to a tree it had better not come at all. However it may be with me I cannot help looking into new countries with ‘O for a Muse of fire to ascend!’<sup>1</sup> If *Endymion* serves me as a Pioneer perhaps I ought to be content. I have great reason to be content, for thank God I can read and perhaps understand Shakespeare to his depths, and I have I am sure many friends, who, if I fail, will attribute any change in my Life and Temper to Humbleness rather than to Pride—to a cowering under the Wings of great Poets rather than to a Bitterness that I am not appreciated.<sup>2</sup> I am anxious to get *Endymion* printed that I may forget it and proceed. I have copied the 3<sup>rd</sup> Book and have begun the 4<sup>th</sup>. On running my Eye over the Proofs—I saw one Mistake I will notice it presently and also any others if there be any. There should

<sup>1</sup> ‘Henry V’, Prologue 1.

<sup>2</sup> Bailey informed Lord Houghton ‘that one of Keats’s favourite topics of conversation was the principle of melody in verse, which he believed to consist in the adroit management of open and close vowels. He had a theory that vowels could be as skilfully combined and interchanged as differing notes of music, and that all sense of monotony was to be avoided, except when expressive of a special purpose. Uniformity of metre is so much the rule of English poetry, that, undoubtedly, the carefully varied harmonies of Keats’s verse were disagreeable, even to cultivated readers, often producing exactly the contrary impression from what was intended, and, combined as they were with rare and curious rhymes, diverted the attention from the beauty of the thoughts and the force of the imagery. In “*Endymion*”, indeed, there was much which not only seemed, but was, experimental; and it is impossible not to observe the superior mastery of melody, and sure-footedness of the poetic paces, in “*Hyperion*”.’



be no comma in 'the raft branch down sweeping from a tall ash top'.<sup>1</sup> I have besides made one or two alterations and also altered the 13 Line Page 32 to make sense of it as you will see. I will take care the Printer shall not trip up my Heels. There should be no dash after Dryope in this Line 'Dryope's lone lulling of her Child.'<sup>2</sup> Remember me to Percy Street.<sup>3</sup>

Your sincere and oblig<sup>d</sup> friend

John Keats—

P.S. You shall have a sho(r)t *Preface* in good time—

52. To TAYLOR AND HESSEY. *(Feb. or March 1818.)*

*Address:* Mess<sup>rs</sup> Taylor & Hessey.

*No postmark.*

My dear Sirs,

I am this morning making a general clearance of all lent Books—all—I am affraid I do not return all—I must jog your memories about them—however with many thanks here are the remainder—which I am affraid are not worth so much now as they were six months ago—I mean the fashions may have changed—

Yours truly

John Keats.

53. To BENJAMIN BAILEY. *Friday (13 March 1818).*

*Address:* M<sup>r</sup> B. Bailey | Magdalen Hall | Oxford—

*Postmark:* TEIGNMOUTH, undated.

Teignmouth Friday

My dear Bailey,

When a poor devil is drowning, it is said he comes thrice to the surface, ere he makes his final sink—if however, even at the third rise, he can manage to catch hold of a piece of weed or rock, he stands a fair chance, as I hope I do now, of being saved. I have sunk twice in our Correspondence, have risen twice and been too idle, or something worse, to extricate myself. I have sunk the third time and just now risen again at this two of the Clock P.M. and

<sup>1</sup> 'Endymion', i. 334-5.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 77 note 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 495.

saved myself from utter perdition—by beginning this, all drench'd as I am and fresh from the Water—and I would rather endure the present inconvenience of a Wet Jacket than you should keep a laced one in store for me. Why did I not stop at Oxford in my Way?—How can you ask such a Question? Why did I not promise to do so? Did I not in a Letter to you make a promise to do so? Then how can you be so unreasonable as to ask me why I did not? This is the thing—(for I have been rubbing up my invention; trying several sleights—I first polish'd a cold, felt it in my fingers tried it on the table, but could not pocket it: I tried Chilblains, Rheumatism, Gout, tight Boots, nothing of that sort would do, so this is, as I was going to say, the thing.—I had a Letter from Tom saying how much better he had got, and thinking he had better stop—I went down to prevent his coming up. Will not this do? Turn it which way you like—it is selvaged all round. I have used it these three last days to keep out the abominable Devonshire Weather—by the by you may say what you will of devonshire: the thuth is, it is a splashy, rainy, misty, snowy, foggy, haily, floody, muddy, slipshod County—the hills are very beautiful, when you get a sight of 'em—the Primroses are out, but then you are in—the Cliffs are of a fine deep Colour, but then the Clouds are continually vieing with them. The Women like your London People in a sort of negative way—because the native men are the poorest creatures in England—because Government never have thought it worth while to send a recruiting party among them. When I think of Wordsworth's Sonnet 'Vanguard of Liberty! ye Men of Kent!' the degenerated race about me are *Pulvis Ipecac. Simplex*—a strong dose.<sup>1</sup> Were I a Corsair I'd make a descent on the South Coast of Devon, if I did not run the chance of having Cowardice imputed to me: as for the Men they'd run away into the methodist meeting houses, and the Women would be glad of it. Had England been a large devonshire we should not have won the Battle of Waterloo. There are knotted oaks—there are lusty rivulets there are Meadows such as are not—there are vallies of femminine Climate but there are no thews and Sinews—Moor's Almanack<sup>2</sup> is here a curiosity—Arms Neck and Shoulders may at least be seen there, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Pulvis Ipecac. Simplex* in a strong dose is an emetic: here = nauseating.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 19, p. 37 and note 1.

Ladies read it as some out of the way romance. Such a quelling Power have these thoughts over me that I fancy the very Air of a deteriorating quality—I fancy the flowers, all precocious, have an Acrasian<sup>1</sup> spell about them—I feel able to beat off the devonshire waves like soap froth. I think it well for the honor of Britain that Julius Cæsar did not first land in this County. A Devonshirer standing on his native hills is not a distinct object—he does not show against the light—a wolf or two would dispossess him. I like I love England. I like its strong Men. Give me a long brown plain<sup>2</sup> for my Morning so I may meet with some of Edmond Ironside's des(c)endants. Give me a barren mould so I may meet with some Shadowing of Alfred in the Shape of a Gipse, a Huntsman or a Shepherd. Scenery is fine—but human nature is finer. The Sward is richer for the tread of a real, nervous, english foot—the eagles nest is finer for the Mountaineer has look'd into it—Are these facts or prejudices? Whatever they are, for them I shall never be able to relish entirely any devonshire scenery—Homer is very fine, Achilles is fine, Diomed is fine, Shakspeare is fine, Hamlet is fine, Lear is fine, but dwindled englishmen are not fine—Where too the Women are so passable, and have such english names, such as Ophelia, Cordelia &c—that they should have such Paramours or rather Imparamours. As for them I cannot, in thought help wishing as did the cruel Emperour, that they had but one head and I might cut it off to deliver them from any horrible Courtesy they may do their undeserving Countrymen.—I wonder I meet with no born Monsters—O Devonshire, last night I thought the Moon had dwindled in heaven. I have never had your Sermon from Wordsworth but M<sup>r</sup> Dilke lent it me. You know my ideas about Religion. I do not think myself more in the right than other people, and that nothing in this world is proveable. I wish I could enter into all your feelings on the subject merely for one short 10 Minutes and give you a Page or two to your liking. I am sometimes so very sceptical as to think Poetry itself a mere Jack a lanthen to amuse whoever may chance to be struck with its brilliance. As Tradesmen say every thing is worth what it will fetch, so

<sup>1</sup> Acrasia, an enchantress in 'The Faerie Queen', personifying want of self-control.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Tempest', 1. i. 71-2.

probably every mental pursuit takes its reality and worth from the ardour of the pursuer—being in itself a nothing—Ethereal thing(s) may at least be thus real, divided under three heads—Things real—things semireal—and no things. Things real—such as existences of Sun Moon & Stars and passages of Shakspeare. Things semi-real such as Love, the Clouds &c which require a greeting of the Spirit to make them wholly exist—and Nothings which are made Great and dignified by an ardent pursuit—which by the by stamps the burgundy mark on the bottles of our Minds, insomuch as they are able to “*consec(r)ate whate’er they look upon*”.<sup>1</sup> I have written a Sonnet<sup>2</sup> here of a somewhat collateral nature—so don’t imagine it an a propos des bottles.

Four Seasons fill the Measure of the year;  
 Four Seasons are there in the mind of Man.  
 He hath his lusty spring when fancy clear  
 Takes in all beauty with an easy span:  
 He hath his Summer, when luxuriously  
 He chews the honied cud of fair spring thoughts,  
 Till, in his Soul dissolv’d they come to be  
 Part of himself. He hath his Autumn ports  
 And Havens of repose, when his tired wings  
 Are folded up, and he content to look  
 On Mists in idleness: to let fair things  
 Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.  
 He hath his Winter too of pale Misfeature,  
 Or else he would forget his mortal nature.

Aye this may be carried—but what am I talking of—it is an old maxim of mine and of course must be well known that every point of thought is the centre of an intellectual world—the two uppermost thoughts in a Man’s mind are the two poles of his World he revolves on them and every thing is southward or northward to him through their means. We take but three steps from feathers to iron. Now my dear fellow I must once for all tell you I have not one Idea of the truth of any of my speculations—I shall never be a Reasoner because I care not to be in the right,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Shelley, ‘Hymn to Intellectual Beauty’, st. 2 (‘Examiner’, 19 January 1817).

<sup>2</sup> First printed in Leigh Hunt’s ‘Literary Pocket-Book’ for 1819 with considerable variations in the text as given here.

when retired from bickering and in a proper philosophical temper. So you must not stare if in any future letter I endeavour to prove that Apollo as he had cat gut strings to his Lyre used a cats' paw as a Pecten—and further from said Pecten's reiterated and continual teasing came the term Hen peck'd. My Brother Tom desires to be remember'd to you—he has just this moment had a spitting of blood poor fellow. Remember me to Greig<sup>1</sup> and Whitehead—

Your affectionate friend  
John Keats—

54. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Saturday* (14 March 1818).

Address: Mr John H. Reynolds Little Brittain Christs Hospital London.

Postmark: not recorded.

Teignmouth Saturday

Dear Reynolds,

I escaped being blown over and blown under & trees & house being toppled on me.—I have since hearing of Brown's accident had an aversion to a dose of parapet, and being also a lover of antiquities I would sooner have a harmless piece of herculaneum sent me quietly as a present than ever so modern a chimney pot tumbled onto my head<sup>2</sup>—Being agog to see some Devonshire, I would have taken a walk the first day, but the rain wo<sup>d</sup> not let me; and the second, but the rain wo<sup>d</sup> not let me; and the third, but the rain forbade it—Ditto 4—ditto 5—ditto—So I made up my Mind to stop in doors, and catch a sight flying between the showers; and behold I saw a pretty valley—pretty cliffs, pretty Brooks, pretty Meadows, pretty trees, both standing as they were created, and blown down as they are uncreated—The green is beautiful, as they say, and pity it is that it is amphibious—mais! but alas! the flowers here wait as naturally for the Rain twice a day as the

<sup>1</sup> Of course Gleig, twice already coupled with Whitehead in Letters 28 and 40, pp. 63, 85.

<sup>2</sup> C. W. Dilke says, 'This alludes to an accident which befell Brown many years before and which must have been about that time first mentioned to Keats and Reynolds. A parapet stone fell and struck Brown on the *calf of the leg*—a narrower escape a man could not well have. Apparently no great harm done—but it got worse and worse and it was doubtful at last whether he would not have lost the limb. This was years before he knew either Keats or Reynolds.'—H.B.F.

Mussels do for the Tide,—so we look upon a brook in these parts as you look upon a dash in your Country—there must be something to support this, aye fog, hail, snow rain—Mist—blanketing up three parts of the year—This devonshire is like Lydia Languish,<sup>1</sup> very entertaining when at smiles, but cursedly subject to sympathetic moisture. You have the sensation of walking under one great Lamplighter: and you can't go on the other side of the ladder to keep your frock clean, and cosset your superstition. Buy a girdle—put a pebble in your Mouth—loosen your Braces—for I am going among Scenery whence I intend to tip you the Damosel Radcliffe<sup>2</sup>—I'll cavern you, and grotto you, and waterfall you, and wood you, and water you, and immense-rock you, and tremendous-sound you, and solitude you. I'll make a lodgment on your glacis by a row of Pines, and storm your covered way with bramble Bushes. I'll have at you with hip and haw small-shot, and cannonade you with Shingles—I'll be witty upon salt fish,<sup>3</sup> and impede your cavalry with clotted cream. But ah Coward! to talk at this rate to a sick man, or I hope to one that was sick—for I hope by this you stand on your right foot—If you are not—that's all,—I intend to cut all sick people if they do not make up their minds to cut sickness—a fellow to whom I have a complete aversion, and who strange to say is harboured and countenanced in several houses where I visit—he is sitting now quite impudent between me and Tom—He insults me at poor Jem Rice's—and you have seated him before now between us at the Theatre—when I thought he look'd with a longing eye at poor Kean. I shall say, once for all, to my friends generally and severally, cut that fellow, or I cut you—I went to the Theatre here the other night which I forgot to tell George, and got insulted, which I ought to remember to forget to tell any Body; for I did not fight, and as yet have had no redress—“Lie thou there, sweetheart!”<sup>4</sup> I wrote to Bailey yesterday, obliged to speak in a high way, and a damme who's affraid,—for I had owed him so long; however, he shall see I will be better in future. Is he in Town yet? I have directed to Oxford as the better chance.

<sup>1</sup> The heroine in Sheridan's 'The Rivals'.

<sup>2</sup> Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823), novelist; see also p. 299.

<sup>3</sup> Teignmouth used to have a considerable trade in dried cod from Newfoundland—called locally 'salt fish'.

<sup>4</sup> '2 Henry IV', II. iv. 196.

I have copied my fourth Book, and shall write the preface soon. I wish it was all done; for I want to forget it and make my mind free for something new—Atkins the Coachman, Bartlet the Surgeon, Simmons<sup>1</sup> the Barber, and the Girls over at the Bonnet shop, say we shall now have a Month of seasonable Weather—warm, witty, and full of invention.<sup>2</sup> Write to me and tell me you are well or thereabouts, or by the holy Beaucœur—which I suppose is the virgin Mary, or the repented Magdalen, (beautiful name, that Magdalen) I'll take to my Wings and fly away to anywhere but old or Nova Scotia—<sup>3</sup>I wish I had a little innocent bit of Metaphysic in my head, to criss-cross this letter: but you know a favorite tune is hardest to be remembered when one wants it most and you, I know have long ere this taken it for granted that I never have any speculations without assoc(i)ating you in them, where they are of a pleasant nature, and you know enough to (for of) me to tell the places where I haunt most, so that if you think for five minutes after having read this you will find it a long letter, and see written in the Air above you,

Your most affectionate friend

John Keats.

Remember me to all. Tom's remembrances to you.

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS, 4 March 1818.

March 4, 1818

My dear Keats/

I shall certainly go mad!—In a field at Stratford upon-Avon, in a field that belonged to Shakespeare; they have found a gold ring and seal<sup>4</sup> with the initial thus—WS(*within a circle*) *a true Lover's knot between*; if this is not Shakespeare who is it?—a true lover's knott.!!—I saw an impression to day, and am to have one as soon as possible—As sure as you breathe, & that he was the first of beings the Seal belonged to him—

—Oh Lord!—

B R Haydon

<sup>1</sup> Probably these are all the names of real inhabitants. Mr. Bartlett, at all events, I well remember as the senior medical practitioner of the place in 1850 and onwards. His name occurs in the list of subscribers for copies of 'Poems by Mrs. I. S. Prowse'. See Biographical Memoranda in the section headed 'The Jeffreys of Teignmouth'. H.B.F.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Twelfth Night', III. ii. 48-9.

<sup>3</sup> Keats no doubt had the trade relations between Teignmouth and North America running in his mind when he wrote this; see reference to Newfoundland on previous page.

<sup>4</sup> The ring is preserved in the Museum at Shakespeare's birthplace and its history is given in the Museum Catalogue. Haydon possibly read about it in 'The Monthly Magazine', 1 February, 1818, p. 6.

55. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Saturday* (14)  
*March 1818.*

*Address:* B R Haydon Esq— | Lisson Grove North | Paddington  
 | Middx

*Postmarks:* TEIGNMOUTH and 23 MR 1818.

Teignmouth Saturd. Morn

My dear Haydon—

In sooth, I hope you are not too sanguine about that seal<sup>1</sup>—in sooth I hope it is not Brumidgeum—in double sooth I hope it is his—and in tripple sooth I hope I shall have an impression. Such a piece of intelligence came doubly welcome to me while in your own County and in your own hand—not but I have blown up said County for its urinal qualifications—the 6 first days I was here it did nothing but rain and at that time having to write to a friend I gave Devonshire a good blowing up—it has been fine for about three days and I was coming round a bit; but to day it rains again—with me the County is yet upon its good behaviour. I have enjoyed the most delightful Walks these three fine days beautiful enough to make me content here all the summer could I stay.

I

<sup>2</sup>For there's Bishop's teign  
 And King's teign  
 And Coomb at the clear teign head.  
 Where close by the Stream  
 You may have your cream  
 All spread upon barley bread.

II

There's Arch Brook  
 And there's larch Brook

55. On the 25th of March Keats wrote to Reynolds of the weather as if the county's trial had lasted three weeks: this gives the 4th as the day of his arrival; and the tenth day from that (when he was writing this letter to Haydon) would be the 14th of March, which was a Saturday. I presume from the dated postmarks, one of which is a London one, that the letter was either detained by Keats, or by Tom who wrote the address, or delayed in the post.

<sup>1</sup> See note 4 on p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> In the holograph the spacing between the stanzas is quite clear; the upright strokes between are of obvious intention and inaccuracy, though in the 'Devon Maid' similar strokes provide accurate numbering.



Both turning many a Mill  
 And cooling the drouth  
 Of the salmon's mouth  
 And fattening his silver gill

II

There is Wild wood  
 A Mild hood  
 To the Sheep on the lea o the down  
 Where the golden furse  
 With its green, thin, spurs  
 Doth Catch at the Maiden's gown

There is newton marsh  
 With its spear grass harsh—  
 A pleasant summer level  
 Where the Maidens sweet  
 Of the Market Street  
 Do meet in the dusk to revel

III

Theres the Barton rich  
 With dyke and ditch  
 And hedge for the thrush to live in  
 And the hollow tree  
 For the buzzing bee  
 And a bank for the Wasp to hive in.

IIII

And O, and O  
 The Daisies blow  
 And the Primroses are waken'd  
 And the violet white  
 Sits in silver plight  
 And the green bud's as long as the spike end

III

Then who would go  
 Into dark Soho  
 And chatter with dack'd hair'd critics  
 When he can stay  
 For the new mown hay  
 And startle the dappled Prickets

Here's some doggrel for you Perhaps you would like a bit of B—hrell—

## I

Where be ye going you devon Maid  
And what have ye there i the Basket?  
Ye tight little fairy—just fresh from the dairy  
Will ye give me some cream if I ask it—

## II

I love you<r> Meads and I love your flowers  
And I love your junkets mainly<sup>1</sup>  
But 'hind the door, I love kissing more  
O look no<t> so disdainly!

## III

I love your Hills and I love your dales.  
And I love your flocks a bleating—  
But O on the hether to lie together  
With both our hearts a beating.

## IIII

I'll put your Basket all safe in a nook  
And your shawl I hang up on this willow  
And we will sigh in the daisy's eye  
And Kiss on a grass green pillow.

I know not if this rhyming fit has done anything—it will be safe with you if worthy to put among my Lyrics  
How does the Work go on? I should like to bring out my *Dentatus*<sup>2</sup> at the time your Epic makes its appearance. I expect to have my Mind soon clear for something new. Tom has been much worse: but is now getting better—his remembrances to you—I think of seeing the dart and Plymouth—but I dont know. It has as yet been a Mystery to me how and when Wordsworth went. I cant help thinking he has returned to his Shell—with his beautiful Wife and his enchanting Sister. It is a great Pity that People should by associating themselves with the finest things, spoil them. Hunt has damned Hampstead and Masks and Sonnets and italian tales—Wordsworth has damned the lakes—Millman has damned the old drama<sup>3</sup>—West has

<sup>1</sup> Keats wrote 'hugely', struck out 'huge', left 'ly', and wrote 'mainly' above.

<sup>2</sup> A picture by Haydon.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 47, p. 100 and n. 3.

damned—wholesale—Peacock has damned sattle,<sup>1</sup> Ollier has damn'd Music<sup>2</sup>—Hazlitt has damned the bigotted and the bluestockined how durst the Man?! he is your only good damner and if ever I am damn'd—damn me if I shoul'nt like him to damn me. It will not be long ere I see you, but I thought I would just give you a line out of Devon—

Your's affectionately  
John Keats

Remember me to all we know

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. *Wednesday*  
*25 March 1818.*

*Address:* John Keats Esq. | Teignmouth | Devonshire

*Postmark:* 2 AP 1818.

March 25th 1818

My dear Keats,

Your bi—ell as you call it, is beautiful & I take it as a great friendly kindness to remember me in that way—as often as you feel inclined to give vent remember I am always ready with pleasure to receive the result—Surely you will not leave Devonshire without going to Plymouth the country round which is most exquisite—I will give you letters and promise you a kind & a welcome reception—Do go my dear Keats, and if you consent let me know & I will write my Friends immediately, and go round by the Totness road which is very fine, & come home by Ashburton, and then by Bridgewater where I have a Sister who will be most happy to see you—I am getting on well, & have got my Christ better than I have ever had it yet—and in a good state to compleat it—I am most happy to hear your Poem is advancing, to publication, God grant it the most compleat success, and may its reputation equal your genius—Devonshire has somehow or other the character of being rainy, but I must own to you I do not think it is more so than any other County, and pray remember the time of year; it has rained in Town almost incessantly ever since you went away, the fact is you dog you carried the rain with you as Ulysses did the Winds and then opening your rain bags you look round with a knowing wink, and say curse this Devonshire how it rains!—Stay till the Summer, and then bask in its deep blue summer Sky, and lush grass, & tawny banks, and silver bubbling rivers—you must not leave Devonshire without seeing some of its Scenery, rocky, mossy, craggy with roaring rivers & as clear as crystal—it will do your mind good—

Shakespeare in speaking of somebody who is gradually dying makes

<sup>1</sup> Mary Shelley writes in her Journal, 11th of February 1818.—'spend the evening at Hunt's', and Jane Clairmont's diary supplements this with—'Peacock, Hogg, and Keats were present'.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Blunden records that Charles Ollier was an amateur flute-player.

<sup>3</sup> *damn me if* heavily scored out, possibly not by Keats.

some one say—"how is he?"—still ill nature & sickness *debate it at their leisure*<sup>1</sup>—is this not exquisite? When I die I'll have my Shakespeare placed on my heart, with Homer in my right hand & Ariosto in the other, Dante under my head, Tasso at my feet, & Corneille under my — I hate that Corneille, a heartless tirade maker—I leave my other side that is my right one, for you, if you realize all of which your Genius is capable, as I am sure you will—

Write me if you go to Devonshire.<sup>2</sup> Mrs Scott "con occhi neri" is as interesting as ever & desires to be remembered—I have heard nothing of Wordsworth ever since he went, which I take to be unkind—Haslitt is going to lecture at Crown & Anchor I am sorry for it, tho' he will get money, it is letting his talents down a little—What affectation in Hunt's title—"Foliage"!—I met that horrid creature Miss Kent, looking like a fury & an old maid, mixed—

Yours ever d<sup>r</sup> Keats,  
B R Haydon

From GEORGE KEATS to JOHN KEATS. Wednesday 18 March 1818.

Address: Jno. Keats | Post Office | Teignmouth | Devonshire.

Imperfect postmark: 18 and 1818.

Pancras Lane—March 18—1818.

My dear John—

Poor Tom—who could have imagined such a change? I have indeed been sanguine; whenever he has occur(r)ed to my thoughts he has appeared nearly in good health, every answer I have given to enquiring Friends has been "much better" and "improving every day". I can hardly beleive this melancholy news, having so long accustomed myself to think altogether otherwise—I hope and trust that your *kind* superintendence will prevent any violent bleeding in future, and consequently that this alarm may prove in the end advantageous; Tom must never again presume on his strength, at all events untill he has *completely* recover'd. John Reynolds is little better, in many respects worse, he has a very bad rheumatic Fever, and suffers constant pain: it is not said that he is dangerously ill, but I cannot help thinking that so many evils acting upon his most irritable disposition; deadening his hopes of his advance in business, consequently all his hopes, must make this illness somewhat dangerous.—I called yesterday but he was not sufficiently well to be seen. His Sisters are well—Your letter<sup>3</sup> was most welcome to him. Bailey's in

<sup>1</sup> 'All's Well that Ends Well', 1. ii. 74-5.

<sup>2</sup> For 'Devonshire' we should of course read 'Plymouth'.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. Letter 54, p. 112. It must have been during the period of this illness that Reynolds wrote the following note to James Hessey which is preserved in the Keats-Shelley Memorial House at Rome:

Thursday

Dear Hessey

I am confined to my room, with a heavy cold & fever, leading a life of pain, sleeplessness & bleeding.

Could you, to beguile the time, lend me Hazlitts first lecture to read over

Town for a few days, on business for Glegg—I have not seen him.—Mr<sup>s</sup> Scott desires her compliments to you and Tom. I have repeatedly called on Taylor & Hessey and have never found them at home, or you should long since have known the progress of your book. Brown has I understand written to you and given you the pleasant information that the printer's are in immediate want of the Fourth book and preface. By the time you have received this I have no doubt but T & H will have received them.—The inclosed 20 pounds No. 834 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> Feby—1818, will reach you before you are quite aground. I am about paying your's as well as Tom's bills, of which I shall keep regular accounts and for the sake of justice and a future proper understanding I intend calculating the probable amount Tom and I are indebted to you, something of this kind must be done, or at the end of two or three years we shall be all at sixes and sevens, let me know when you want Money. I have paid Hodgkinson who desires his best rems.—I'll write Tom soon give my love to him—rems to Miss M & C—and love to the Miss J's<sup>1</sup>—Miss Wylie as usual desires her *respects* to you, and *best wishes* to Tom—R Draper has been teasing throughout the writing of this to my great annoyance—

Good bye for the present

Your most affectionate Brother

—George.

56. To TAYLOR AND HESSEY. *Saturday, 21 March 1818.*

*Address:* Mess<sup>rs</sup> Taylor & Hessey | Booksellers &c.— | Fleet Street | London.

*Postmarks:* TEIGNMOUTH and 23 MA 1818.

Teignmouth Saturday Morn—

My dear Sirs,

I had no idea of your getting on so fast—I thought of bringing my 4th Book to Town all in good-time for you, especially after the late unfortunate chance.

I did not however for my own sake delay finishing the copy which was done a few days after my arrival here. I send it off to day, and will tell you in a Postscript at what time to send for it from the Bull and Mouth or other Inn. You will find the Preface and dedication, and the title Page as I should wish it to stand—for a ramance is a fine

—unless it is in hand, or at the Printers—I will return it to night. I am as low, as bad company. Have you a proof of Keats' Poem for a body.

Yrs truly

J. H. Reynolds

I believe I must take Wordsworths leech gatherer into keeping.

<sup>1</sup> No doubt the Misses Jeffrey, with whom, the brothers were on very friendly terms.

thing notwithstanding the circulating Libraries. My respects to M<sup>rs</sup> Hessey and to Percy Street.<sup>1</sup>

Your's very sincerely  
John Keats

P.S. I have been advised to send it to you—you may expect it on Monday for I send it by the Post-man to Exeter at the same time with this Letter. Adieu

57. To JAMES RICE. *Tuesday 24 March 1818.*

Address: M<sup>r</sup> James Rice Jun<sup>r</sup> | Poland Street | Oxford Street | London—

Postmarks: TEIGNMOUTH and 26 MR 1818.

Teignmouth Tuesday,

My dear Rice,

Being in the midst of your favorite Devon, I should not by rights, pen one word but it should contain a vast portion of Wit, Wisdom, and learning—for I have heard that Milton ere he wrote his Answer to Salmasius came into these parts, and for on(e) whole Month, rolled himself, for three whole hours in a certain meadow hard by us—where the mark of his nose at equidistances is still shown. The exhibitor of said Meadow further saith that after these rollings, not a nettle sprang up in all the seven acres for seven years and that from said time a new sort of plant was made from the white thorn, of a thornless nature very much used by the Bucks of the present day to rap their Boots withall. This account made me very naturally suppose that the nettles and thorns etherealized by the Scholars rotatory motion and garner'd in his head thence flew after a new fermentation against the luckless Salmasius and occasioned his well known and unhappy end. What a happy thing it would be if we could settle our thoughts, make our minds up on any matter in five Minutes and remain content—that is to build a sort of mental Cottage of feelings quiet and pleasant—to have a sort of Philosophical Back Garden, and cheerful holiday-keeping front one—but Alas! this never can be: ~~the~~ for as the material Cottager knows there are such places as France and Italy and the Andes and the Burning Mountains—so the spiritual Cottager has knowledge of the terra semi incognita of things unearthly; and cannot for his Life, keep in the check rein—Or I should stop here quiet and comfortable

<sup>1</sup> See p. 77, note 6.

in my theory of Nettles. You will see however I am obliged to run wild, being attracted by the Loadstone Concatenation. No sooner had I settle<d> the <k>notty point of Salmasius that <for than> the Devil put this whim into my head in the likeness of one of Pythagora's questionings 'Did Milton do more good or harm to the world? He wrote let me inform you (for I have it from a friend, who had it of——) he wrote Lycidas, Comus, Paradise Lost and other Poems, with much delectable prose—he was moreover an active friend to Man all his Life and has been since his death. Very good—but my dear fellow I must let you know that as there is ever the same quantity of matter constituting this habitable globe—as the ocean notwithstanding the enormous changes and revolutions taking place in some or other of its demesnes—notwithstanding Water-spouts whir<l>pools and mighty Rivers emptying themselves into it, it still is made up of the same bulk—nor ever varies the number of its Atoms—And as a certain bulk of Water was instituted at the Creation—so very likely a certain portion of intellect was spun forth into the thin Air for the Brains of Man to prey upon it. You will see my drift without any unnecessary parenthesis. That which is contained in the Pacific and<sup>1</sup> lie in the hollow of the Caspian—that which was in Miltons head could not find Room in Charles the seconds—he like a Moon attracted ~~the~~ Intellect to its flow—it has not ebbed yet—but has left the shore pebble all bare—I mean all Bucks<sup>2</sup> Authors of Hengist and Castlereaghs of the present day—who without Miltons gormandizing might have been all wise Men. Now for as much as—I was very predisposed to a Country I had heard you speak so highly of, I took particular notice of every thing during my journey and have bought some folio asses Skin for Memorandums. I have seen every thing but the wind—and that they say becomes visible by taking a dose of Acorns or sleeping on<e> night in a hog trough with your tail to the Sow Sow West. Some of the little Barmaids look'd at me as if I knew Jem Rice—but when I took <torn> Brandy they were quite convinced. One asked whether you preserved<sup>3</sup> a secret she gave you

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. M. R. Ridley suggests, for 'and' read 'can't'.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Bucke (1781–1846) was a bad dramatist—'Hengist', I believe, a bad play.—H.B.F.

<sup>3</sup> Word doubtful.

on the nail—another how m(an)y buttons of your Coat were buttoned in general.—I <told> her it used to be four—but since you had become acquainted with one Martin you had reduced it to three and had been turning this third one in your Mind—and would do so with finger and thumb only you had taken to snuff. I have met with a Brace or twain of little Long heads—not a bit o' the german—all in the neatest little dresses, and avoiding all the pudd(les)—but very fond of peppermint drops, laming ducks, and seeing little Girls affairs. Well I can't tell! I hope you are showing poor Reynolds the way to get well—send me a good account of him and if I can I'll send you one of Tom. Oh! for a day and all well! I went yesterday to dawlish fair—

Over the hill and over the dale,  
And over the bourn to Dawlish—  
Where Gingerbread Wives have a scanty sale  
And gingerbre(a)d nuts are smallish.

Rantipole Betty she ran down a hill  
And ki(c)k'd up her pettic(o)ats fairly  
Says I I'll be Jack if you will be Gill.  
So she sat on the Grass debonnairly.

Here's somebody coming, here's som(e)body coming!  
Says I 'tis the Wind at a parley  
So without any fuss any hawing and humming  
She lay on the grass debonnai(r)ly.

Here's somebody here and here's somebody there!  
Say's I hold your tongue you young Gipseey.  
So she held her tongue and lay plump and fair  
And dead as a venus tipsy.

O who wouldn't hie to Dawlish fair  
O who would'nt stop in a Meadow  
O <who> would not rumple the daisies there  
And make the wild fern for a bed do.

Tom's Remembrances and mine to all—  
Your sincere friend  
John Keats



58. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Wednesday 25 March 1818.*

*Address:* Mr J. H. Reynolds | Little Britain | Christ's Hospital | London.

*Postmark:* not recorded.

Teignmouth, 25 March 1818.

Dear Reynolds, as last night I lay in bed,  
There came before my eyes that wonted thread  
Of Shapes, and Shadows and Remembrances,  
That every other minute vex and please:  
Things all disjointed come from North and south,  
Two witch's eyes above a Cherub's mouth,  
Voltaire with casque and shield and Habergeon,<sup>1</sup>  
And Alexander with his night-cap on—  
Old Socrates a tying his cravat;  
And Hazlitt playing with Miss Edgeworth's cat;  
And Junius Brutus pretty well so so,<sup>2</sup>  
Making the best of's way towards Soho.

Few are there who escape these visitings—  
P'erhaps one or two, whose lives have patent wings;  
And through whose curtains peeps no hellish nose,  
No wild board tushes,<sup>3</sup> and no Mermaid's toes:  
But flowers bursting out with lusty pride;  
And young Æolian harps personified,  
Some, Titian colours touch'd into real life.—  
The sacrifice goes on; the pontif knife  
Gleams in the sun, the milk-white heifer lows,  
The pipes go shrilly, the libation flows:  
A white sail shews above the green-head cliff  
Moves round the point, and throws her anchor stiff.  
The Mariners join hymn with those on land.—

You know the Enchanted Castle it doth stand  
Upon a Rock on the Border of a Lake  
Nested in Trees, which all do seem to shake  
From some old Magic like Urganda's<sup>4</sup> sword.  
O Phœbus that I had thy sacred word  
To shew this Castle in fair dreaming wise

<sup>1</sup> In Letter 16, p. 33, Keats spells this word 'Herbadgeon'.

<sup>2</sup> Junius Brutus Booth (1796–1852), actor. The slang term *pretty well so-so* was used by Keats's set to signify *pretty well tipsy*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'Venus and Adonis', ll. 614, 617.

<sup>4</sup> Woodhouse (and query Keats) had two words obliterated here (query 'the witch's') with 'Urganda's' added above the line.

Unto my friend, while sick and ill he lies.

You know it well enough, where it doth seem  
A mossy place, a Merlin's Hall, a dream.  
You know the clear Lake, and the little Isles,  
The Mountains blue, and cold near neighbour rills—  
All which elsewhere are but half animate  
Here do they look alive to love and hate;  
To smiles and frowns; they seem a lifted mound  
Above some giant, pulsing underground.

Part of the building was a chosen See  
Built by a banish'd Santon of Chaldee:<sup>1</sup>  
The other part two thousand years from him  
Was built by Cuthbert de Saint Aldebrim;  
Then there's a little wing, far from the Sun,  
Built by a Lapland Witch turn'd Maudlin nun—  
And many other juts of aged stone  
Founded with many a mason-devil's groan.

The doors all look as if they oped themselves,  
The windows as if latch'd by fays & elves—  
And from them comes a silver flash of light  
As from the Westward of a Summer's night;  
Or like a beauteous woman's large blue eyes  
Gone mad through olden songs and Poesies—

See what is coming from the distance dim!  
A golden galley all in silken trim!  
Three rows of oars are lightening moment-whiles  
Into the verdurous bosoms of those Isles.  
Towards the Shade under the Castle Wall  
It comes in silence—now tis hidden all.  
The clarion sounds; and from a postern grate  
An echo of sweet music doth create  
A fear in the poor herdsman who doth bring  
His beasts to trouble the enchanted spring:  
He tells of the sweet music and the spot  
To all his friends, and they believe him not.

O that our dreamings all of sleep or wake  
Would all their colours from the Sunset take:  
From something of material sublime,  
Rather than shadow our own Soul's daytime  
In the dark void of Night. For in the world  
We jostle—but my flag is not unfurl'd

<sup>1</sup> Here the following line is written and erased:  
'Poor Man he left the Terrace Walls of Ur.' *Woodhouse's note.*

On the Admiral staff—and to philosophize  
 I dare not yet!—Oh never will the prize,  
 High reason, and the lore of good and ill  
 Be my award. Things cannot to the will  
 Be settled, but they tease us out of thought.  
 Or is it that Imagination brought  
 Beyond its proper bound, yet still confined,—  
 Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind,  
 Cannot refer to any standard law  
 Of either earth or heaven?—It is a flaw  
 In happiness to see beyond our bourn—  
 It forces us in Summer skies to mourn:  
 It spoils the singing of the Nightingale.

Dear Reynolds. I have a mysterious tale  
 And cannot speak it. The first page I read  
 Upon a Lampit Rock of green sea weed  
 Among the breakers—'Twas a quiet Eve;  
 The rocks were silent—the wide sea did weave  
 An untumultuous fringe of silver foam  
 Along the flat brown sand. I was at home,  
 And should have been most happy—but I saw  
 Too far into the sea; where every maw  
 The greater on the less feeds evermore:—  
 But I saw too distinct into the core  
 Of an eternal fierce destruction,  
 And so from Happiness I far was gone.  
 Still am I sick of it: and though to-day  
 I've gathered young spring-leaves, and flowers gay  
 Of Periwinkle and wild strawberry,  
 Still do I that most fierce destruction see,  
 The Shark at savage prey—the hawk at pounce,  
 The gentle Robin, like a pard or ounce,  
 Ravening a worm—Away ye horrid moods,  
 Moods of one's mind!<sup>1</sup> You know I hate them well,  
 You know I'd sooner be a clapping bell  
 To some Kamschatkan missionary church,  
 Than with these horrid moods be left in lurch—  
 Do you get health—and Tom the same—I'll dance,  
 And from detested moods in new Romance  
 Take refuge—Of bad lines a Centaine dose  
 Is sure enough—and so "here follows prose".<sup>2</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wordsworth, 'Poems in Two Volumes', 1807.

<sup>2</sup> 'Twelfth Night', II. v. 156.

My dear Reynolds,

In hopes of cheering you through a Minute or two, I was determined nill he will he to send<sup>1</sup> you some lines so you'll excuse the unconnected subject, & careless verse. You know, I am sure, Claude's Enchanted Castle, and I wish you may be pleased with my remembrance of it. The Rain is come on again I think with me Devonshire stands a very poor chance. I shall damn it up hill and down dale, if it keeps up to the average of 6 fine days in three weeks. Let me have better news of you.

Y<sup>r</sup> affect<sup>o</sup> Friend

Toms Rememb<sup>s</sup> to you. Rem<sup>r</sup> John Keats  
us to all—

59. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Wednesday 8 April 1818.*

*Address:* B R Haydon Esq<sup>r</sup> | Lisson Grove North | Paddington Middx<sup>2</sup>

*Postmarks:* TEIGNMOUTH and 10 AP 1818.

Wednesday—

My dear Haydon,

I am glad you were pleased with my nonsense and if it so happen that the humour takes me when I have set down to prose to you I will not gainsay it. I should be (god forgive me) ready to swear because I cannot make use of you(r) assistance in going through Devon if I was not in my own Mind determined to visit it thoroughly at some more favorable time of the year. But now Tom (who is getting greatly better) is anxious to be in Town therefore I put off my threading the County. I purpose within a Month to put my knapsack at my back and make a pedestrian tour through the North of England, and part of Scotland—to make a sort of Prologue to the Life I intend to pursue—that is to write, to study and to see all Europe at the lowest expence. I will clamber through the Clouds and exist. I will get such an accumulation of stupendous recollections that as I walk through the suburbs of London I may not see them—I will stand upon Mount Blanc and remember this coming Summer when I intend to straddle ben Lomond—with my Soul!—galligaskins are out of the Question—I am nearer myself to

<sup>1</sup> Another transcript reads 'scribble'.

<sup>2</sup> The address was written by Tom.

hear your Christ is ~~having~~ being tinted into immortality—Believe me Haydon your picture is a part of myself—I have ever been too sensible of the labyrinthian path to eminence in Art (judging from Poetry) ever to think I understood the emphasis of Painting. The innumerable compositions and decompositions which take place between the intellect and its thousand materials before it arrives at that trembling delicate and snail-horn<sup>1</sup> perception of Beauty. I know not you⟨r⟩ many havens of intenseness—nor ever can know them—but for this I hope no⟨ugh⟩t you adchieve is lost upon me: for when a Schoolboy the abstract Idea I had of an heroic painting—was what I cannot describe I saw it somewhat sideways large prominent round and colour'd with magnificence—somewhat like the feel I have of Anthony and Cleopatra. Or of Alcibiades, leaning on his Crimson Couch in his Galley, his broad shoulders imperceptibly heaving with the Sea—That ⟨for What⟩ passage in Shakspeare is finer than this

'See how the surly Warwick mans the Wall'<sup>2</sup>

I like your consignment of Corneille—that's the humor of it<sup>3</sup>—They shall be called your Posthumous Works. I don't understand you⟨r⟩ bit of Italian.<sup>4</sup> I hope she will awake from her dream and flourish fair—my respects to her. The Hedges by this time are begining to leaf—Cats are becoming more vociferous—young Ladies that wear Watches are always looking at them—Women about forty five think the Season very backward—Ladie's Mares have but half an allowance of food—It rains here again, has been doing so for three days—however as I told you I'll take a trial in June July or August next year.

I am affraid Wordsworth went rather huff'd out of Town—I am sorry for it. he cannot expect his fireside Divan to be infallible he cannot expect but that every Man of worth is as proud as himself. O that he had not fit with a Warrener<sup>5</sup> that is din'd at Kingston's. I shall be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. quotation from 'Venus and Adonis' in Letter 30, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> '3 Henry VI', v. i. 17.

<sup>3</sup> 'Henry V', ii. i. 101.

<sup>4</sup> The allusion to Mrs. Scott's black eyes—see Haydon's letter of the 25th of March 1818, p. 119, where also will be found the reference to Corneille. The next passage, on the season, should be compared with 'A Now, descriptive of a Hot Day', written by Leigh Hunt with Keats's help and printed in 'The Indicator' for the 28th of June 1820.

<sup>5</sup> 'Merry Wives of Windsor', i. iv. 28.

in town in about a fortnight and then we will have a day or so now and then before I set out on my northern expedition—we will have no more abominable Rows—for they leave one is (*for in*) a fearful silence having settled the Methodists let us be rational—not upon compulsion<sup>1</sup>—no if it will out let it—but I will not play the Basson any more delibe(r)ately<sup>2</sup>—Remember me to Hazlitt, and Bewick<sup>3</sup>—

Your affectionate friend  
John Keats—

60. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Thursday* (9 April 1818).

Address: J H Reynolds Esq | Little Brittain | Christ Hospital London.

Postmark: not recorded.

Thy Morn<sup>g</sup>

My Dear Reynolds,

Since you all agree that the thing<sup>4</sup> is bad, it must be so—though I am not aware there is anything like Hunt in it, (and if there is, it is my natural way, and I have something in common with Hunt) look it over again and examine into the motives, the seeds from which any one sentence sprung—I have not the slightest feel of humility towards the Public—or to anything in existence,—but the eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of great Men—When I am writing for myself for the mere sake of the Moment's enjoyment, perhaps nature has its course with me—but a Preface is written to the Public; a thing I cannot help looking upon as an Enemy, and which I cannot address without feelings of Hostility—If I write a Preface in a supple or subdued style, it will not be in character with me as a public speaker—I wo<sup>d</sup> be subdued before my friends, and thank them for subduing me—but among Multitudes of Men—I have no feel of stooping, I hate the idea of humility to them—

<sup>1</sup> Cf. '1 Henry IV', II. iv. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick W. Haydon says in the 'Correspondence', volume II, page 11, that Keats 'appears to allude here to the violent political and religious discussions of the set, as much as to an absurd practice they had, when they met, of amusing themselves after dinner by a concert, each imitating a different instrument (see Letter 34, n. 4, p. 73). The fun was as boisterous by all accounts as the discussion was heated.'

<sup>3</sup> 'and Bewick' heavily scored out, but not, I think, by Keats.

<sup>4</sup> The first preface to 'Endymion'.

I never wrote one single Line of Poetry with the least Shadow of public thought.

Forgive me for vexing you and making a Trojan horse of such a Trifle, both with respect to the matter in Question, and myself—but it eases me to tell you—I could not live without the love of my friends—I would jump down Ætna for any great Public Good—but I hate a Mawkish Popularity.—I cannot be subdued before them—My glory would be to daunt and dazzle the thousand jabberers about Pictures and Books—I see swarms of Porcupines with their Quills erect “like lime-twigs set to catch my Winged Book”<sup>1</sup> and I would fright ’em away with a torch—You will say my preface is not much of a Torch. It would have been too insulting “to begin from Jove” and I could not (set) a golden head upon a thing of clay—if there is any fault in the preface it is not affectation: but an undersong of disrespect to the Public—if I write another preface, it must be done without a thought of those people—I will think about it.<sup>2</sup> If it should not reach you in four—or five days—tell Taylor to publish it without a preface, and let the dedication simply stand “inscribed to the Memory of Thomas Chatterton”.

I had resolved last night to write to you this morning—I wish it had been about something else—something to greet you towards the close of your long illness—I have had one or two intimations of your going to Hampstead for a space; and I regret to see your confounded Rheumatism keeps you in Little Britain where I am sure the air is too confined—Devonshire continues rainy. As the drops beat against the window, they give me the same sensation as a quart of cold water offered to revive a half-drowned devil—No feel of the clouds dropping fatness; but as if the roots of the Earth were rotten cold and drench’d—I have not been able to go to Kents’ Ca(ve) at Babbicum—however on one very beautiful day I had a fine Clamber over the Rocks all along as far as that place: I shall be in Town in about Ten days.—We go by way of Bath on purpose to call on Bailey. I hope soon to be writing to you about the things of the north, purposing to wayfare all over those

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ‘2 Henry VI’, m. iii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> For the original Preface, dated ‘Teignmouth March 19th 1818’, see Oxford edition of ‘The Poetical Works of John Keats’, p. lxxxviii: and for that published with ‘Endymion’ and dated ‘Teignmouth, April 10, 1818’, which was sent to Reynolds with Letter 61, see same book, p. 64.

parts. I have settled my accoutrements in my own mind, and will go to gorge wonders: However we'll have some days together before I set out—

I have many reasons for going wonder-ways: to make my winter chair free from spleen<sup>1</sup>—to enlarge my vision—to escape disquisitions on Poetry and Kingston Criticism<sup>2</sup>—to promote digestion and economise shoe-leather—I'll have leather buttons and belt; and if Brown holds his mind, over the Hills we go.—If my Books will help me to it,—thus will I take all Europe in turn,<sup>3</sup> and see the Kingdoms of the Earth and the glory of them—Tom is getting better he hopes you may meet him at the top o' the hill—My Love to your nurses.

I am ever  
Your affectionate Friend,  
John Keats.

61. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Friday* (10)  
*April 1818.*

*Address:* John H. Reynolds Esq<sup>re</sup> | Little Brittain | Christ's Hospital | London.

*Postmark:* *Imperfect*—AP. 18

Friday.

My dear Reynolds,

I am anxious you should find this Preface<sup>4</sup> tolerable—if there is an affectation in it, 'tis natural to me. Do let the Printer's Devil cook it—and let me be "as the casing air".<sup>5</sup>

You are too good in this Matter—were I in your state I am certain I should have no thought but of discontent and illness—I might tho' be taught patience. I had an idea of giving no Preface however don't you think this had better go?—O let it, one should not be too afraid of committing faults.

The Climate here weighs us d(own) completely—Tom is quite low spirited. (It is) impossible to live in a country which is continually under hatches. Who w(ould) live in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Fancy', ll. 16, 25.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is probably to Kingston the Commissioner of Stamps. See Letter 34, pp. 74-5.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 59, p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> The preface published with 'Endymion'.

<sup>5</sup> 'Macbeth', iii. iv. 23. Cf. Letter 34, note 1, p. 77.



the Region of Mists, Game Laws, indemnity Bills &c when there is such a place as Italy? It is said this England from its Clime produces a Spleen<sup>1</sup> able to engender the finest Sentiment—and covers the whole face of the Isle with green—so it ought I'm sure. I should still like the Dedication simply as I said in my last.<sup>2</sup>

I wanted to send you a few Songs written in your favorite Devon—it cannot be—Rain! Rain! Rain! I am going this Morning to take a fac simile of a Letter of Nelson's very much to his honor—you will be greatly pleased when you see it—in about a Week. What a spite it is one cannot get out the little way I went yesterday I found a lane bank'd on each side with store of Primroses—while the earlier bushes are beginning to leaf—

I shall hear a good account of you soon.

Your Affectionate friend

John Keats

My Love to all and remember me to Taylor.

62. To JOHN TAYLOR. *Friday 24 April 1818.*

*Address:* John Taylor Esq<sup>re</sup> | Taylor & Hessey's | Booksellers  
&c | Fleet Street.

*Postmarks:* TEIGNMOUTH and 27 AP 1818.

Teignmouth Friday<sup>3</sup>

My dear Taylor,

I think I did very wrong to leave you to all the trouble of Endymion—but I could not help it then—another time

<sup>1</sup> This refers to 'The Spleen. An Epistle inscribed to his particular Friend Mr. C. J.' by Matthew Green (1696–1737), published in 1737.

<sup>2</sup> Keats's insistence on this point may be in requisition some of these days. Dante Gabriel Rossetti was anxious to see the original Dedication substituted for the final and simpler one; and other critics of the future may have the same preference, which I am sure Rossetti would have been the last to push to execution had he noticed these passages on the subject.—H.B.F.

<sup>3</sup> The 'Teignmouth' postmark on this letter has no date, but there is another postmark dated '27 Ap.' That date was a Monday; and a pencilled '27 April, 1818', evidently added by the recipient, chronicles the day of arrival. Woodhouse records that 'Endymion' was published in April; and it is clear from this holograph letter that Keats had examined the printed book at Teignmouth by the 24th of that month, and had managed to get the astounding blunder about Tellus feeling the load of her own forehead instead of Ocean's set right by the single-line erratum leaf printed as a portion of the earliest copies of the book.

I shall be more bent to all sort of troubles and disagreeables—Young Men for some time have an idea that such a thing as happiness is to be had<sup>1</sup> and therefore are extremely impatient under any unpleasant restraining—in time however, of such stuff is the world about them, they know better and instead of striving from Uneasiness greet it as an habitual sensation, a pannier which is to weigh upon them through life.

And in proportion to my disgust at the task is my sense of your kindness & anxiety—the book pleased me much—it is very free from faults; and although there are one or two words I should wish replaced, I see in many places an improvement greatly to the purpose—

I think those speeches which are related—those parts where the speaker repeats a speech—such as Glaucus' repetition of Circe's words, should have inverted commas to every line—In this there is a little confusion. If we divide the speeches into *identical* and *related*: and to the former put merely one inverted comma at the beginning and another at the end; and to the latter inverted commas before every line, the book will be better understood at the first glance. Look at pages 126 and 127 you will find in the 3 line the beginning of a *related* speech marked thus "Ah! art awake—while at the same time in the next page the continuation of the *identical speech* is mark'd in the same manner "Young Man of Latmos—You will find on the other side all the parts which should have inverted commas to every line.

I was purposing to travel over the north this Summer—there is but one thing to prevent me—I know nothing I have read nothing and I mean to follow Solomon's directions of 'get Wisdom—get understanding'<sup>2</sup>—I find cavalier days are gone by. I find that I can have no enjoyment in the World but continual drinking of Knowledge—I find there is no worthy pursuit but the idea of doing some good for the world—some do it with their society—some with their wit—some with their benevolence—some with a sort of power of conferring pleasure and good humour on all they meet and in a thousand ways all equally dutiful to the command of Great Nature—there is but one way for me—the road lies th(r)ough application study and thought. I

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 31, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs iv. 5.

will pursue it and to that end purpose retiring for some years. I have been hovering for some time between an exquisite sense of the luxurious and a love for Philosophy—were I calculated for the former I should be glad—but as I am not I shall turn all my soul to the latter.

My Brother Tom is getting better and I hope I shall see both him and Reynolds well before I retire from the World. I shall see you soon and have some talk about what Books I shall take with me—

Your very sincere friend

John Keats

Remember me to Hessey—Woodhouse and Percy Street<sup>1</sup>

#### ERRATA<sup>2</sup>—

- Page 4 line 4 place the comma after *old*  
 — 60 — 12 for *head* read *bead* ×  
 — 66 — 5 place a comma after *dim*  
 — 88 — 13 for 'my kindest' read 'delicious'  
 — 90 — 10 for 'honour' read 'horror' ×  
 — 98 leave out the inverted commas in lines 12 and 14.  
 — ~~122 line 12 for 'utmost' read 'tiptop'~~  
 — 166 line 17 for '*is it*' read '*is't*'  
 — 151 — 3 dele comma  
 — 177 there should be a white space after the 5th line  
 — 185 line 13 a note of exclam. after *longing* instead of the full stop.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 77 note 6.

<sup>2</sup> 'Parts that should,' &c. and 'more last words' (see p. 135) are on the bottom and top 'doublings' respectively. The two crosses against *bead* and *horror* are in pencil, probably made by Taylor to indicate that those corrections at all events were to be included in the five-line Errata about to be printed, which in fact included also *screen* and *kisses gave* as well as the Tellus correction of the one-line Erratum.

With regard to the correction demanded in line 12 of p. 122, it should be noted that Keats cancelled it by striking the whole line through with his pen. This abandonment of the correction is curious, though unassailable. The passage is (iii. 352-3):—

But the crown  
Of all my life was utmost quietude:

Keats had written *tiptop quietude* in the MS. Taylor had printed *utmost quietude*. No sooner had the startled poet directed the restoration of his own word than it flashed upon him (presumably) that *tiptop* was too current a bit of slang to maintain. So he struck out his erratum; and Taylor's *utmost* remains accepted to this day, with other 'improvements greatly to the purpose'.—H.B.F.

Page 205 line 6 dele inverted commas after ha!"

There is a great mistake in the 1<sup>st</sup> line page 195—it should read thus—

"Favour from thee and so *I kisses gave*  
To the void air &c"

Page 194 line 3 for not of interrog. put not of exclam

I cannot discover any other error—the preface is well without those things you have left out—Adieu—

*Parts that should have inverted commas to every line*

Page 47 from line 12 to line 7 in the next page

— 126 ——— 3 ——— 17

— 132 ——— the 4 from the bottom to line 5 in page  
134

Those ab(b)reviations of *is't* of *is it* and *done't* for *done it* are of great consequence  
more last words

Page 47 line 10 for *scene* read *scene*

— 201 — 6 from the bottom for the note of exclam  
put a note of interrog—

— 90 — 3 for *done it* read *done't*

63. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Monday 27 April 1818.*

*Address:* Mr J. H. Reynolds | Mr Butlers | 2 Spencer Place |  
Kennington Common.

*Postmark:* not recorded.

Teignmouth Monday

My dear Reynolds

It is an awful while since you have heard from me—I hope I may not be punished, when I see you well, and so anxious as you always are for me, with the remembrance of my so seldom writing when you were so horribly confined—the most unhappy hours in our lives are those in which we recollect times past to our own blushing—If we are immortal that must be the Hell—If I must be immortal, I hope it will be after having taken a little of "that watery labyrinth"<sup>1</sup> in order to forget some of my schoolboy days & others since those.

I have heard from George at different times how slowly

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Paradise Lost', II. 583–5.

you were recovering. It is a tedious thing—but all Medical Men will tell you how far a very gradual amendment is preferable; you will be strong after this, never fear.—We are here still enveloppd in clouds—I lay awake last night listening to the Rain with a sense of being drown'd and rotted like a grain of wheat. There is a continual courtesy between the Heavens and the Earth.—The heavens rain down their unwelcomeness and the Earth sends it up again to be returned to morrow. Tom has taken a fancy to a physician here, D<sup>r</sup> Turton,<sup>1</sup> and I think is getting better—therefore I shall perhaps remain here some Months. I have written to George for some Books—shall learn Greek,<sup>2</sup> and very likely Italian—and in other ways prepare myself to ask Hazlitt in about a years time the best metaphysical road I can take.<sup>2</sup> For although I take Poetry to be Chief, <yet> there is something else wanting to one who passes his life among Books and thoughts on Books—I long to feast upon old Homer as we have upon Shakespeare, and as I have lately upon Milton. If you understood Greek, and would read me passages, now and then, explaining their meaning, 'twould be, from its mistiness, perhaps a greater luxury than reading the thing one's self.—I shall be happy when I can do the same for you.—I have written for my folio Shakespeare,<sup>2</sup> in which there is the first few stanzas of my "Pot of Basil": I have the rest here finish'd, and will copy the whole out fair shortly, and George will bring it you.—The Compliment is paid by us<sup>3</sup> to Boccace, whether we publish or no: so there is content in this world—mine is short—you must be deliberate about yours: you must not think of it till many months after you are quite

<sup>1</sup> William Turton, M.D., F.L.S. (1762–1835), wrote 'Some Observations on Consumption, Scrofula', &c., published in Dublin in 1813; 'A Conchological Dictionary of the British Islands', London, 1819, the postscript to which is dated 'Teignmouth, Devonshire, Jan. 1, 1819'; and other works on medical and natural history subjects.

<sup>2</sup> A Greek grammar and Hazlitt's 'Principles of Human Action' occur in Charles Brown's list of books belonging to Keats. The 1808 facsimile reprint of the first folio Shakespeare, which he gave to Fanny Brawne in 1820, is now in the Keats Museum, Hampstead: it contains holographs of the 'King Lear' sonnet and the 'Lines on Seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair'.

<sup>3</sup> Keats and Reynolds projected jointly a volume of metrical versions from Boccaccio. Reynolds after reading the 'Pot of Basil' wrote to Keats urging him to publish it and saying: 'you will remember that we were [to print?] together. I give over all intention, and you ought to be alone. I can never write anything now—my mind is taken the other way.' Yet after Keats's death he published 'The Garden of Florence and Other Poems' (1821) including 'The Ladye of Provence'.

well:—then put your passion to it,—and I shall be bound up with you in the shadows of Mind, as we are in our matters of human life.—Perhaps a Stanza or two will not be too foreign to your Sickness.

Were they unhappy then?—It cannot be—  
 Too many tears for lovers have been shed,  
 Too many sighs give we to them in fee,  
 Too much of pity after they are dead,  
 Too many doleful stories do we see,  
 Whose matter in bright gold were best be read;  
 Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse  
 Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

But, for the general award of love,  
 The little sweet doth kill much bitterness;  
 Though Dido silent is in under-grove,  
 And Isabella's was a great distress,  
 Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove  
 Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less—  
 Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,  
 Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

---

She wept alone for pleasures not to be;  
 Sorely she wept until the night came on,  
 And then, instead of love, O misery!  
 She brooded o'er the luxury alone:  
 What might have been too plainly did she see,  
 And to the silence made a gentle moan,  
 Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,  
 And on her couch low murmuring 'Where? O where?'

I heard from Rice this morning—very witty—and have just written to Bailey—Don't you think I am brushing up in the letter way? and being in for it,—you shall hear again from me very shortly:—if you will promise not to put hand to paper for me until you can do it with a tolerable ease of health—except it be a line or two—Give my Love to your

Mother and Sisters. Remember me to the Butlers—not forgetting Sarah.<sup>1</sup>

Your affectionate friend,  
John Keats

64. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Sunday 3 May 1818.*

*Address:* Mr John H. Reynolds | Little Britain | Christs Hospital London.

*Postmark:* not recorded.

Teignmouth, May 3<sup>d</sup>.

My dear Reynolds.

What I complain of is that I have been in so an uneasy state of Mind as not to be fit to write to an invalid. I cannot write to any length under a disguised feeling. I should have loaded you with an addition of gloom, which I am sure you do not want. I am now thank God in a humour to give you a good groats worth—for Tom, after a Night without a Wink of sleep, and overburdened with fever, has got up after a refreshing day sleep and is better than he has been for a long time; and you I trust have been again round the Common without any effect but refreshment.—As to the Matter I hope I can say with Sir Andrew<sup>2</sup> “I have matter enough in my head” in your favor And now, in the second place, for I reckon that I have finished my Imprimis, I am glad you blow up the weather all through your letter there is a leaning towards a climate-curse, and you know what a delicate satisfaction there is in having a vexation anathematized: one would think there has been growing up for these last four thousand years, a grandchild Scion of the old forbidden tree, and that some modern Eve had just violated it; and that there was come with double charge

“Notus and Afer, black with thunderous clouds  
From Sierraleona.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Letter 98, written at Hampstead, in the part dated January 2, 1819 (p. 259), Keats declares his intention of not going again to Butler's, and in Letter 111 (p. 279) writing from Bedhampton, January 24, 1819, Charles Brown mentions a proposed call on a Mr. Butler. See also Letter 50, p. 105 and n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Slender, ‘Merry Wives of Windsor’, 1.1. 128.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Paradise Lost’, x. 702–3.

I shall breathe worsted stockings<sup>1</sup> sooner than I thought for—Tom wants to be in town—we will have some such days upon the heath like that of last summer—and why not with the same book: or what say you to a black-Letter Chaucer<sup>2</sup> printed in 1596: aye I've got one huzza! I shall have it bounden gothique—a nice sombre binding—it will go a little way to unmodernize. And also I see no reason, because I have been away this last month, why I should not have a peep at your Spencerian<sup>3</sup>—notwithstanding you speak of your office, in my thought a little too early, for I do not see why a Mind like yours is not capable of harbouring and digesting the whole Mystery of Law as easily as Parson Hugh does Pepins<sup>4</sup>—which did not hinder him from his poetic Canary—Were I to study physic or rather Medicine again, I feel it would not make the least difference in my Poetry; when the Mind is in its infancy a Bias is in reality a Bias, but when we have acquired more strength, a Bias becomes no Bias. Every department of Knowledge we see excellent and calculated towards a great whole. I am so convinced of this, that I am glad at not having given away my medical Books, which I shall again look over to keep alive the little I know thitherwards; and moreover intend through you and Rice to become a sort of pip-civilian. An extensive knowledge is needful to thinking people—it takes away the heat and fever; and helps, by widening speculation, to ease the Burden of the Mystery:<sup>5</sup> a thing I begin to understand a little, and which weighed upon you in the most gloomy and true sentence in your Letter. The difference of high Sensations with and without knowledge appears to me this—in the latter case we are falling continually ten thousand fathoms deep<sup>6</sup> and being blown up again without wings and with all (the) horror of a bare shouldered creature<sup>7</sup>—in the former case, our shoulders are fledge,<sup>6</sup> and we go thro' the same air and space without fear. This is running one's rigs on the score of abstracted benefit—when we come to human Life

<sup>1</sup> Under the same roof with the children of the Postman Bentley, at whose house the Keatses lodged.

<sup>2</sup> Probably that of 1598; a 1596 Chaucer is unknown.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Romance of Youth', in 104 Spenserian stanzas, published in 'The Garden of Florence and Other Poems', 1821.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 'Merry Wives of Windsor', I. ii. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Wordsworth, 'Tintern Abbey', l. 38.

<sup>6</sup> 'Paradise Lost', II. 934 and III. 627.    <sup>7</sup> Cf. 'King Lear', III. iv. 111.



and the affections it is impossible <to know> how a parallel of breast and head can be drawn—(you will forgive me for thus privately treading out <of> my depth, and take it for treading as schoolboys tread the water)—It is impossible to know how far Knowledge will console us for the death of a friend and the ill “that flesh is heir to”<sup>1</sup>—With respect to the affections and Poetry you must know by a sympathy my thoughts that way; and I dare say these few lines will be but a ratification: I wrote them on May-day—and intend to finish the ode all in good time.—

Mother of Hermes! and still youthful Maia!  
 May I sing to thee  
 As thou wast hymned on the shores of Baiæ?  
 Or may I woo thee  
 In earlier Sicilian? or thy smiles  
 Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,  
 By Bards who died content on pleasant sward,  
 Leaving great verse unto a little clan?  
 O give me their old vigour, and unheard,  
 Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span  
 Of Heaven and few ears  
 Rounded by thee My song should die away  
 Content as theirs  
 Rich in the simple worship of a day.—

You may be anxious to know for fact to what sentence in your Letter I allude. You say “I fear there is little chance of any thing else in this life”. you seem by that to have been going through with a more painful and acute zest the same labyrinth that I have—I have come to the same conclusion thus far. My Branchings out therefrom have been numerous: one of them is the consideration of Wordsworth’s genius and as a help, in the manner of gold being the meridian Line of worldly wealth,—how he differs from Milton.—And here I have nothing but surmises, from an uncertainty whether Miltons apparently less anxiety for Humanity proceeds from his seeing further or no than Wordsworth: And whether Wordsworth has in truth epic passion, and martyrs himself to the human heart, the main region of his song<sup>2</sup>—In regard to his genius alone—we find

<sup>1</sup> ‘Hamlet’, III. i. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth, fragment of ‘The Recluse’, l. 41.

what he says true as far as we have experienced and we can judge no further but by larger experience—for axioms in philosophy are not axioms until they are proved upon our pulses: We read fine things but never feel them to the full until we have gone<sup>1</sup> the same steps as the Author.—I know this is not plain; you will know exactly my meaning when I say, that now I shall relish Hamlet more than I ever have done—Or, better—You are sensible no Man can set down Venery as a bestial or joyless thing until he is sick of it and therefore all philosophizing on it would be mere wording. Until we are sick, we understand not;—in fine, as Byron says, “Knowledge is Sorrow”;<sup>2</sup> and I go on to say that “Sorrow is Wisdom”—and further for aught we can know for certainty “Wisdom is folly”!—So you see how I have run away from Wordsworth, and Milton, and shall still run away from what was in my head, to observe, that some kind of letters are good squares others handsome ovals, and other some orbicular, others spheroid—and why should there not be another species with two rough edges like a Rat-trap? I hope you will find all my long letters of that species, and all will be well; for by merely touching the spring delicately and etherially, the rough edged will fly immediately into a proper compactness; and thus you may make a good wholesome loaf, with your own leaven in it, of my fragments—If you cannot find this said Rat-trap sufficiently tractable—alas for me, it being an impossibility in grain for my ink to stain otherwise: If I scribble long letters I must play my vagaries. I must be too heavy, or too light, for whole pages—I must be quaint and free of Tropes and figures—I must play my draughts as I please, and for my advantage and your erudition, crown a white with a black, or a black with a white, and move into black or white, far and near as I please—I must go from Hazlitt to Patmore,<sup>3</sup> and make Wordsworth and Coleman<sup>4</sup> play at leap-frog—or keep one of them down a whole half-holiday at fly the garter—“from Gray to Gay, from Little

<sup>1</sup> Woodhouse queries ‘overgone’.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Manfred’, i. i. 10: ‘Sorrow is knowledge.’

<sup>3</sup> Peter George Patmore (1786–1855), the intimate of Hazlitt in the matter of ‘Liber Amoris’, was the author of ‘The Mirror of the Months’, ‘Letters on England’, 1823, and many later works, including ‘My Friends and Acquaintance’ (3 volumes, 1854). He was the father of Coventry Patmore.

<sup>4</sup> George Colman the younger (1762–1836).

to Shakespeare"<sup>1</sup>—Also, as a long cause requires two or more sittings of the Court, so a long letter will require two or more sittings of the Breech wherefore I shall resume after dinner.—

Have you not seen a Gull, an orc, a Sea Mew<sup>2</sup>, or any thing to bring this Line to a proper length, and also fill up this clear part; that like the Gull I may *dip*<sup>3</sup>—I hope, not out of sight—and also, like a Gull, I hope to be lucky in a good sized fish—This crossing a letter is not without its association—for chequer work leads us naturally to a Milkmaid, a Milkmaid to Hogarth Hogarth to Shakespeare Shakespeare to Hazlitt—Hazlitt to Shakespeare and thus by merely pulling an apron string we set a pretty peal of Chimes at work—Let them chime on while, with your patience, I will return to Wordsworth—whether or no he has an extended vision or a circumscribed grandeur—whether he is an eagle in his nest, or on the wing—And to be more explicit and to show you how tall I stand by the giant, I will put down a simile of human life as far as I now perceive it; that is, to the point to which I say we both have arrived at—Well—I compare human life to a large Mansion of Many Apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me. The first we step into we call the infant or thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think.—We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second Chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of this thinking principle within us—we no sooner get into the second Chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight: However among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of Man—of convincing one's nerves that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Pope, 'Essay on Man', iv. 380. Thomas Little was the pseudonym under which Moore issued his 'Poetical Works', 1801.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Paradise Lost', xi. 831.

<sup>3</sup> Woodhouse has recorded that the first page of the letter was crossed, and that the first two lines, being written in the margin, stood out clearly, while the word 'dip' was the first word that dipped into the obscurity of the writing which at that point Keats began to cross.

the world is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression<sup>1</sup>—whereby this Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages—We see not the balance of good and evil. We are in a Mist. *We* are now in that state—We feel the “burden of the Mystery”/To this Point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive when he wrote ‘Tintern Abbey’ and it seems to me that his Genius is explorative of those dark Passages. Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them—he is a Genius and superior (to) us, in so far as he can, more than we, make discoveries, and shed a light in them—Here I must think Wordsworth is deeper than Milton—though I think it has depended more upon the general and gregarious advance of intellect, than individual greatness of Mind—From the Paradise Lost and the other Works of Milton, I hope it is not too presuming, even between ourselves to say, that his Philosophy, human and divine, may be tolerably understood by one not much advanced in years, In his time englishmen were just emancipated from a great superstition—and Men had got hold of certain points and resting places in reasoning which were too newly born to be doubted, and too much opposed by the Mass of Europe not to be thought etherial and authentically divine—who could gainsay his ideas on virtue, vice, and Chastity in Comus, just at the time of the dismissal of Cod-pieces and a hundred other disgraces? who would not rest satisfied with his hintings at good and evil in the Paradise Lost, when just free from the inquisition and burning in Smithfield? The Reformation produced such immediate and great benefits, that Protestantism was considered under the immediate eye of heaven, and its own remaining Dogmas and superstitions, then, as it were, regenerated, constituted those resting places and seeming sure points of Reasoning—from that I have mentioned, Milton, whatever he may have thought in the sequel, appears to have been content with these by his writings—He did not think into the human heart, as Wordsworth has done—Yet Milton as a Philosopher, had sure as great powers as Wordsworth—What is then to be inferr’d? O many things—It proves there is really a grand march of intellect—, It

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ‘The Fall of Hyperion’, i. 147-9.

proves that a mighty providence subdues the mightiest Minds to the service of the time being, whether it be in human Knowledge or Religion—I have often pitied a Tutor who has to hear “Nom: Musa”—so often dinn’d into his ears—I hope you may not have the same pain in this scribbling—I may have read these things before, but I never had even a thus dim perception of them; and moreover I like to say my lesson to one who will endure my tediousness for my own sake—After all there is certainly something real in the World—Moore’s present to Hazlitt<sup>1</sup> is real—I like that Moore, and am glad I saw him at the Theatre just before I left Town. Tom has spit a leetle blood this afternoon, and that is rather a damper—but I know—the truth is there is something real in the World. Your third Chamber of Life shall be a lucky and a gentle one—stored with the wine of love—and the Bread of Friendship. When you see George if he should not have received a letter from me tell him he will find one at home most likely—tell Bailey I hope soon to see him—Remember me to all. The leaves have been out here, for mony a day—I have written to George for the first stanzas of my Isabel—I shall have them soon and will copy the whole out for you.

Your affectionate friend  
John Keats.

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS, *Friday 8 May 1818.*

*No address or postmark.*

8th of May 1818.

My dear Keats,

I have read your delicious Poem,<sup>2</sup> with exquisite enjoyment, it is the most delightful thing of the time—you have taken up the great trumpet of nature and made it sound with a voice of your own—I write in a great hurry—You will realize all I wish or expect—Success attend you my glorious fellow—& Believe me

ever & ever yours  
B R Haydon

<sup>1</sup> Mr. P. P. Howe in ‘The Life of William Hazlitt’ (1922) says: ‘We do not know what Moore’s present to Hazlitt can have been, unless it was a copy of “The Fudge Family in Paris” which Moore sent at this time, and which as a tribute of respect from a fashionable poet to the leading spirit of “The Yellow Dwarf”, was not unacceptable’. A copy of the third edition of ‘The Fudge Family in Paris’ (1818) inscribed ‘To William Hazlitt Esq’, as a small mark of respect for his literary talents & political principles from the Author. April 27th, 1818’—came into Mr. Howe’s possession in October 1934.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Endymion.’

65. To M<sup>rs</sup> JEFFREY. (May 1818.)

Address: M<sup>rs</sup> Jeffrey, | Teignmouth.

No postmark.

Honiton.

My dear M<sup>rs</sup> Jeffrey,

My Brother has borne his Journey thus far remarkably well. I am too sensible of your anxiety for us not to send this by the Chaise back for you. Give our goodbyes again to Marrian and Fanny. Believe me we shall bear you in Mind and that I shall write soon.

Yours very truly,  
John Keats.

66. To BENJAMIN BAILEY. Thursday 21 to Monday 25 May 1818.

Address: M<sup>r</sup> B. Bailey | Magdalen Hall | Oxford.

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 25 MY 1818.

Hampstead Thursday—

My dear Bailey,

I should have answered your letter on the moment—if I could have said yes to your invitation. What hinders me is insuperable; I will tell it at a little length. You know my Brother George has been out of employ for some time—it has weighed very much upon him, and driven him to scheme and turn over things in his Mind—the result has been his resolution to emigrate to the back Settlements of America, become farmer and work with his own hands

65. Up to 1891 Mrs. Jeffrey and her daughters remained unknown in the story of Keats. Between that time and the publication of my father's illustrated edition of the Letters in 1895, this letter and three others to the young ladies were discovered. Mr. A. Forbes Sieveking published them in 'The Fortnightly Review' for December 1893.

The date of this note cannot be fixed definitely from present information, but it must have been written after May the 3rd and some days before May the 17th, when Tom wrote from Hampstead to Miss Mary Ann Jeffrey: 'We received your Mothers Letter by M<sup>rs</sup> Atkins which prevented my writing so soon as I had intended that the Letter might accompany the Book John promis'd you and be deliver'd by M<sup>rs</sup> A on her return—I thank you all for your kind solicitude—the rest of the journey pass'd off pretty well after we had left Bridport in Dorsetshire—I was very ill there and lost much blood—we travell'd a hundred miles in the two last days—I found myself much better at the end of the journey than when I left *Tartarus* alias Teignmouth—' &c. On the 18th of May Tom added: 'John will write to you shortly', and the letter was posted on the 19th.

after purchasing 1400 hundred Acres of the<sup>7</sup> American Government. This for many reasons has met with my entire consent—and the chief one is this—he is of too independant and liberal a Mind to get on in trade in this Country—in which a generous Man with a scanty recourse must be ruined. I would sooner he should till the ground than bow to a Customer—there is no choice with him; he could not bring himself to the latter. I would not consent to his going alone—no; but that objection is done away with—he will marry before he sets sail a young Lady<sup>1</sup> he has known some years—of a nature liberal and high-spirited enough to follow him to the Banks of the Mississippi(p)i. He will set off in a month or six weeks, and you will see how I should wish to pass that time with him—and then I must set out on a journey of my own. Brown and I are going a pedestrian tour through the north of England and Scotland as far a(s) John o' Grots. I have this morning such a Lethargy that I cannot write—the reason of my delaying is oftentimes from this feeling—I wait for a proper temper. Now you ask for an immediate answer I do not like to wait even till tomorrow. However I am now so depressed that I have not an Idea to put to paper—my hand feels like lead—and yet it is and unpleasant numbness it does not take away the pain of existence. I don't know what to write—Monday (25 May). —You see how I have delayed—and even now I have but a confused idea of what I should be about my intellect must be in a degen(er)ating state—it must be for when I should be writing about god knows what I am troubling you with Moods of my own Mind<sup>2</sup> or rather body—for Mind there is none. I am in that temper that if I were under Water I would scarcely kick to come to the top. I know very well 'tis all nonsense. In a short time I hope I shall be in a temper to fell (for feel) sensibly your mention of my Book—in vain have I waited till Monday to have any interest in that or in any thing else. I feel no spur at my Brothers going to America, and am almost stony-hearted about his wedding. All this will blow over—all I am sorry for is having to write to you in such a time—but I cannot force my letters in a hot bed. I could not feel comfortable in making sentences for you. I am your

<sup>1</sup> Georgiana Augusta Wylie.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 58, p. 126.

debtor—I must ever remain so—nor do I wish to be clear of my rational debt—~~✓~~ There is a comfort in throwing oneself on the charity of ones friends—'tis like the Albatros(s) sleeping on its wings. I will be to you wine in the cellar and the more modestly or rather indolently I retire into the backward Bin, the more falerne will I be at the drinking. There is one thing I must mention. My Brother talks of sailing in a fortnight if so I will most probably be with you a week before I set out for Scotland. The middle of your first page should be sufficient to rouse me—what I said is true and I have dreamt of your mention of it and my not a(n)swering it has weighed on me since. If I come, I will bring your Letter and hear more fully your Sentiments on one or two points. I will call about the Lectures at Taylor's and at Little Britain tomorrow—Yesterday I dined with Hazlitt, Barnes,<sup>1</sup> and Wilkie at Haydon's. The topic was the Duke of Wellington very amusingly pro and con'd. Reynolds has been getting much better; and Rice may begin to crow for he got a little so so at a Party of his and was none the worse for it the next morning. I hope I shall soon see you for we must have many new thoughts and feelings to analize, and to discover whether a little more knowledge has not made us more ignorant.

Your's affectionately

John Keats—

67. To the Misses M. and S. JEFFREY, Thursday 4 June  
(1818).

Address: For Misses M. and S. Jeffrey

Apparently not sent by post.

Hampstead June 4<sup>th</sup>

My dear Girls,

I will not pretend to string a list of excuses together for not having written before—but must at once confess the indolence of my disposition which makes a letter more formidable to me than a Pilgrimage. I am a fool in delay for the idea of neglect is an everlasting Knapsack which even now I have scarce power to hoist off—by the bye talking of everlasting Knapsacks I intend to make my fortune by them in case of a War (which you must consequently pray for) by contracting with Government for

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Barnes (1786–1841), editor of 'The Times', 1817–41. He had been associated with Leigh Hunt and Hazlitt as a writer for 'The Examiner'.



said materials to the economy of one branch of the Revenue. At all events a Tax which is taken from the people and shouldered upon the Military ought not to be snubb'd at. I promised to send you all the News. Harkee! The whole city corporation with a deputation from the Fire Offices are now engaged at the London Coffee house in secret conclave concerning Saint Paul's Cathedral its being washed clean. Many interesting speeches have been demosthenized in said Coffee house as to the Cause of the black appearance of the said Cathedral. One of the yeal-thigh Aldermen actually brought up three Witnesses to depose how they beheld the ci-devant fair Marble turn black on the tolling of the great Bell for the amiable and tea-table-lamented Princess<sup>1</sup>—adding moreover that this sort of sympathy in inanimate objects was by no means uncommon for said the Gentleman 'As we were once debating in the common Hall M<sup>r</sup> Waithman<sup>2</sup> in illustration of some case in point quoted Peter Pindar,<sup>3</sup> at which the head of George the third although in hard marble squinted over the Mayor's seat at the honerable speaker so oddly that he was obliged to sit down'. However I will not tire you about these Affairs for they must be in your newspapers by this time. You see how badly I have written these last three lines so I will remain here and take a pinch of snuff every five Minutes until my head becomes fit and proper and legitimately inclined to scribble—Oh! there's nothing like a pinch of snuff except perhaps a few trifles almost beneath a philosopher's dignity, such as a ripe Peach or a Kiss that one takes on a lease of 91 moments—

on a building lease. Talking of that is the Capt<sup>n</sup> married yet, or rather married Miss Mitchel<sup>4</sup>—is she stony hearted enough to hold out this season. Has the Doctor given Miss Perryman<sup>4</sup> a little love powder—tell him to do so—it really would not be unamusing to see her languish a little

*depressing or painful  
condition*

<sup>1</sup> See note 1 on p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Waithman (1764–1833), linen-draper and political reformer. Lord Mayor, 1823–4, and sometime M.P. for the City of London. Took the chair at the meeting called on the 29th of December, 1817, to raise a fund 'to promote the permanent welfare of Mr. Hone and his Family' (see Letter 34, p. 75). He had a shop at 103–4 Fleet Street, now demolished, and an obelisk to his memory stands in Ludgate Circus.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. John Wolcot (1738–1819) wrote satires against the king and queen.

<sup>4</sup> Captain (afterwards Sir Warwick) Tonkin *did* marry Miss Mitchell. The name 'Perryman' should be 'Periman'.

—Oh she must be quite melting this hot Weather. Are the little Robins weaned yet? Do they walk alone? You have had a christening a top o' the tiles and a Hawk has stood God father and taken the little Brood under the Shadows of its Wings much in the way of Mother Church—a Cat too has very tender bowels in such pathetic Cases. They say we are all all (that is our set) mad at Hampstead. There's George took unto himself a Wife a Week ago and will in a little time sail for America and I with a friend am preparing for a four Months Walk all over the North—and belike Tom will not stop here—he has been getting much better—Lord what a Journey I had and what a relief at the end of it—I'm sure I could not have stood it many more days.<sup>1</sup> Hampstead is now in fine order. I suppose Teignmouth and the *contagious* country is now quite remarkable—you might praise it I dare say in the manner of a grammatical exercise—*The trees are full—the den<sup>2</sup> is crowded—the boats are sailing—the musick is playing.* I wish you were here a little while—but lauk we havent got any female friend in the house. Tom is taken for a Madman and I being somewhat stunted am taken for nothing—We lounge on the Walk opposite as you might on the Den—I hope the fine Season will keep up your Mother's Spirits—she was used to be too much down hearted. No Women ought to be born into the world for they may not touch the bottle for shame—now a Man may creep into a bung hole<sup>3</sup>—however this is a tale of a tub—however I like to play upon a pipe sitting upon a puncheon and intend to be so drawn in the frontispiece to my next book of Pastorals—My Brothers respects and mine to your Mother and all our Loves to you

Yours very sincerely

John Keats

P.S. has many significations—here it signifies Post Script—on the corner of a Handkerchief Polly Saunders—Upon a Garter Pretty Secret—Upon a Band Box Pink Sattin—At the Theatre Princes Side—on a Pulpit Parson's Snuffle—and at a Country Ale House Pail Sider.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 145, note on Letter 65.

<sup>2</sup> The open space between the sea and the houses facing it is still called the Den (= dene).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'Hamlet', v. i. 225.

68. To JOSEPH SEVERN. *Saturday 6 June 1818.*

*Address:* Mr. Jos. Severn | Islington Road | near the Angel Inn.

*Postmark:* 6 JU 1818.

My dear Severn,

The Doctor says I must n't go out. I wish such a delicious fate would but <for put> me in cue to entertain you with a Sonnet or a Pun.

I am,

yours ever

John Keats

69. To BENJAMIN BAILEY. *Wednesday 10 June 1818.*

*Address:* Mr B— Bailey | Magdalen Hall | Oxford—

*Postmark:* 10 JU 1818.

London—

My dear Bailey,

I have been very much gratified and very much hurt by your Letters in the Oxford Paper:<sup>1</sup> because independant of that unlawful and mortal feeling of pleasure at praise, there is a glory in enthusia(s)m; and because the world is malignant enough to chuckle at the most honorable Simplicity. Yes on my Soul my dear Bailey you are too simple for the World—and that Idea makes me sick of it—How is it that by extreme opposites we have as it were got discon-<ten>ted nerves—you have all your Life (I think so) believed every Body—I have suspected every Body—and although you have been so deceived you make a simple appeal—the world has something else to do, and I am glad of it—were it in my choice I would reject a petrarchal coronation—on accou(n)t of my dying day, and because women have Cancers.<sup>2</sup> I should not by rights speak in this tone to you—for it is an incendiary<sup>being so ill of you</sup> spirit that would do so. Yet I am not old enough or magnanimous enough to an(n)ihilate self—and it would perhaps be paying you an ill compliment. I was in hopes some little time back to be able to releive your dullness by my spirits—to point out things in the world worth your enjoyment—and now I am never alone without rejoicing that there is such a thing as death—without placing my ultimate in the glory of

<sup>1</sup> 'The Oxford University and City Herald' for the 30th of May and 6th of June, 1818.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 40, p. 83, l. 14.

dying for a great human purpose. Perhaps if my affairs were in a different state I should not have written the above—you shall judge—I have two Brothers one is driven by the 'burden of Society' to America the other, with an exquisite love of Life, is in a lingering State. My Love for my Brothers from the early loss of our parents and even for earlier Misfortunes has grown into a(n) affection 'passing the Love of Women'<sup>1</sup>.—I have been ill temper'd with them, I have vex'd them—but the thought of them has always stifled the impression that any woman might otherwise have made upon me. I have a Sister too and may not follow them, either to America or to the Grave—Life must be undergone, and I certainly derive a consolation from the thought of writing one or two more Poems before it ceases. I have heard some hints of your retiring to Scotland—I should like to know your feeling on it—it seems rather remote—perhaps Gle(i)g will have a duty near you. I am not certain whether I shall be able to go my Journey on account of my Brother Tom and a little indisposition of my own—If I do not you shall see me soon—if no(t) on my return—or I'll quarter myself upon you in Scotland next Winter. I had know(n) my sister in Law some time before she was my Sister and was very fond of her. I like her better and better—she is the most disinterested woman I ever knew—that is to say she goes beyond degree in it. To see an entirely disinterested Girl quite happy is the most pleasant and extraordinary thing in the world—it depends upon a thousand Circumstances—on my word 'tis extraordinary. Women must want Imagination and they may thank God for it—and so m(a)y we that a delicate being can feel happy without any sense of crime. It puzzles me and I have no sort of Logic to comfort me—I shall think it over. I am not at home and your letter being there I cannot look it over to answer any particular—only I must say I felt that passage of Dante—if I take any book with me it shall be those minute volumes of Carey<sup>2</sup> for they will go into the aptest corner. Reynolds is getting I may say robust—his illness has been of service to him—like ev(e)ry one just recoverd he is high-spirited. I hear also good accounts of Rice. With respect to domestic Literature—the Endinburgh Magasine in another blow up

<sup>1</sup> 2 Samuel i. 26.

<sup>2</sup> He did take them: see Letter 79, p. 193.

against Hunt calls me 'the amiable Mister Keats'<sup>1</sup> and I have more than a Laurel from the Quarterly Reviewers for they have smothered me in 'Foliage'<sup>2</sup> I want to read you my 'Pot of Basil' if you go to Scotland I should much like to read it there to you among the Snows of next Winter. My Brothers' remembrances to you.

Your affectionate friend

John Keats—

70. To JOHN TAYLOR. Sunday 21 June 1818.

Address: John Taylor Esq<sup>re</sup> | Taylor and Hessey's | Booksellers &c | Fleet Street—

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 22 JU 1818.

Sunday evening

My dear Taylor,

I am sorry I have not had time to call and wish you health till my return. Really I have been hard run these three last days. However Au revoir! God keep us all well.—I start tomorrow morning. My Brother Tom will I am afraid be lonely—I can scarcely ask the loan of Books for him—since I still keep those you lent me a year ago—if I am overweening you will be I know will be indulgent. Therefore when he shall write do send him some you think will be most amusing—he will be careful in returning them. Let him have one of my Books bound. I am ashamed to catalogue these Messages there is but one more which ought to go for nothing as there is a Lady concerned I promised Mr<sup>s</sup> Reynolds one of my Books bound. As I cannot write in it let the opposite<sup>3</sup> be pasted in prythee Remember me to Percy Street<sup>4</sup>—Tell Hilton<sup>5</sup> that one gratification on my return will be to find him engaged in a History Piece

<sup>1</sup> In 'Letter from Z. to Leigh Hunt, King of the Cockneys', 'Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine', May 1818, p. 197: 'amiable but infatuated bardling, Mister John Keats' is the exact phrase.

<sup>2</sup> Number 36 of 'The Quarterly Review', published in June 1818, contained a review of Leigh Hunt's 'Foliage'. The 'other blow up' was one of the series of articles on the 'Cockney School', which was appearing in 'Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine'. Keats is not expressly mentioned in the 'Quarterly' article; but there are covert references both to him and to Shelley—indicating that the shameful articles on 'Laon and Cythna' and 'Endymion' were probably already in contemplation.

<sup>3</sup> Whether Taylor complied with this request so far as to send the book I do not know, but, if he did, he omitted to have 'the opposite' pasted in as it remains with the letter as given at the end.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 77, note 6.

<sup>5</sup> William Hilton (1786–1839), historical painter.

to his content—and Tell Dewint<sup>1</sup> I shall become a disputant on the Landscape—bow for me very genteely to Mr<sup>s</sup> D. or she will not admit your diploma. Remember me to Hessey saying I hope he'll *Carey*<sup>2</sup> his point—I would not forget Woodhouse. Adieu

Your sincere friend  
John O' Grots

Mr<sup>s</sup> Reynolds with J. K's respects.

70a. To THOMAS MONKHOUSE. Sunday 21 June 1818.

Address: Monkhouse Esq<sup>re</sup> | Queen Street West

Postmark illegible.

Hampstead Sunday Evening

My Dear Sir

I regret not being at home when you called the other day—the more because I shall set out tomorrow morning for the North. I was very much gratified in hearing from Haydon that you so great a Lover of Wordsworth should be pleased with any part of my Poem. In hopes of seeing you soon after my return and speaking of my visit to Rydal<sup>3</sup>—I remain

Your's very truly  
John Keats—

71. To THOMAS KEATS. Thursday 25–Saturday 27 June 1818.

Address and postmark: not recorded.

Here beginneth my journal, this Thursday, the 25th day of June, Anno Domini 1818. This morning we arose at 4,

<sup>1</sup> Peter De Wint (1784–1849), landscape painter; married Hilton's sister Harriet in 1810.

<sup>2</sup> The allusion is probably to some point connected with the publication of Cary's Dante for which an agreement had been signed by the translator and Taylor and Hessey at Coleridge's Highgate home on the 11th of May 1818. The Dante was advertised at the end of 'Endymion', and is referred to in the previous letter. See also Letter 79 and note 1, p. 193.

<sup>3</sup> For the outcome of the visit to Rydal see Letters 72, p. 157 and 73, p. 160.

71. This letter was first printed, from a manuscript furnished by George Keats, in the June 1836 issue of 'The Western Messenger', a Louisville, Kentucky, magazine, edited by James Freeman Clarke. The same number contained the 'Ode to Apollo' ('God of the Golden Bow') printed from the original manuscript given to the Editor by George. In 1920 attention was drawn to the Keatsian interest of the magazine in the sale catalogue of Walter Thomas Wallace's Library, New York. In 1924 Professor Ralph Leslie Rusk communicated the letter to 'The North American Review' for March, and he subsequently kindly furnished me with a photostat of the 'Western Messenger' print from which it is given here.

and set off in a Scotch mist; put up once under a tree, and in fine, have walked wet and dry to this place, called in the vulgar tongue Endmoor, 17 miles; we have not been incommoded by our knapsacks; they serve capitally, and we shall go on very well.

June 26—I merely put *pro forma*, for there is no such thing as time and space, which by the way came forcibly upon me on seeing for the first hour the Lake and Mountains of Winander—I cannot describe them—they surpass my expectation—beautiful water—shores and islands green to the marge—mountains all round up to the clouds. We set out from Endmoor this morning, breakfasted at Kendal with a soldier who had been in all the wars for the last seventeen years—then we have walked to Bowne's (*for* Bowness) to dinner—said Bowne's situated on the Lake where we have just dined, and I am writing at this present. I took an oar to one of the islands to take up some trout for our dinner, which they keep in porous boxes. I enquired of the waiter for Wordsworth—he said he knew him, and that he had been here a few days ago, canvassing for the Lowthers.<sup>1</sup> What think you of that—Wordsworth versus Brougham!!<sup>1</sup> Sad—sad—sad—and yet the family has been his friend always. What can we say? We are now about seven miles from Rydale, and expect to see him to-morrow. You shall hear all about our visit.

There are many disfigurements to this Lake—not in the way of land or water. No; the two views we have had of it are of the most noble tenderness—they can never fade away—they make one forget the divisions of life; age, youth, poverty and riches; and refine one's sensual vision into a sort of north star which can never cease to be open lidded and stedfast over the wonders of the great Power.<sup>2</sup> The disfigurement I mean is the miasma of London. I do suppose it contaminated with bucks and soldiers, and women of fashion—and hatband ignorance. The border inhabitants are quite out of keeping with the romance about them, from a continual intercourse with London rank and fashion. But why should I grumble? They let me have a prime glass of soda water—O they are as good as their neighbors. But Lord Wordsworth, instead of being in retirement, has himself and his house full in the thick of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 78, p. 185, note 2.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the Sonnet, 'Bright Star', ll. 1, 3.

fashionable visitors quite convenient to be pointed at all the summer long. When we had gone about half this morning, we began to get among the hills and to see the mountains grow up before us—the other half brought us to Wynandermere, 14 miles to dinner. The weather is capital for the views, but is now rather misty, and we are in doubt whether to walk to Ambleside to tea—it is five miles along the borders of the Lake. Loughrigg will swell up before us all the way—I have an amazing partiality for mountains in the clouds. There is nothing in Devon like this, and Brown says there is nothing in Wales to be compared to it. I must tell you, that in going through Cheshire and Lancashire, I saw the Welsh mountains at a distance. We have passed the two castles, Lancaster and Kendal. 27th—We walked here to Ambleside yesterday along the border of Winandermere all beautiful with wooded shores and Islands—our road was a winding lane, wooded on each side, and green overhead, full of Foxgloves—every now and then a glimpse of the Lake, and all the while Kirkstone and other large hills nestled together in a sort of grey black mist. Ambleside is at the northern extremity of the Lake. We arose this morning at six, because we call it a day of rest, having to call on Wordsworth who lives only two miles hence—before breakfast we went to see the Ambleside water fall. The morning beautiful—the walk early among the hills. We, I may say, fortunately, missed the direct path, and after wandering a little, found it out by the noise—for, mark you, it is buried in trees, in the bottom of the valley—the stream itself is interesting throughout with “mazy error over pendant shades”.<sup>1</sup> Milton meant a smooth river—this is buffetting all the way on a rocky bed ever various—but the waterfall itself, which I came suddenly upon, gave me a pleasant twinge. First we stood a little below the head about half way down the first fall, buried deep in trees, and saw it streaming down two more descents to the depth of near fifty feet—then we went on a jut of rock nearly level with the second fall-head, where the first fall was above us, and the third below our feet still—at the same time we saw that the water was divided by a sort of cataract island on whose other side burst out a glorious stream—then the thunder and the freshness. At the same time the different falls have

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ‘Paradise Lost’, iv. 239.



as different characters; the first darting down the slate-rock like an arrow; the second spreading out like a fan—the third dashed into a mist—and the one on the other side of the rock a sort of mixture of all these. We afterwards moved away a space, and saw nearly the whole more mild, streaming silverly through the trees. What astonishes me more than any thing is the tone, the coloring, the slate, the stone, the moss, the rock-weed; or, if I may so say, the intellect, the countenance of such places. The space, the magnitude of mountains and waterfalls are well imagined before one sees them; but this countenance or intellectual tone must surpass every imagination and defy any remembrance. I shall learn poetry here and shall henceforth write more than ever, for the abstract endeavor of being able to add a mite to that mass of beauty which is harvested from these grand materials, by the finest spirits, and put into ethereal existence for the relish of one's fellows. I cannot think with Hazlitt that these scenes make man appear little. I never forgot my stature so completely—I live in the eye; and my imagination, surpassed, is at rest—We shall see another waterfall near Rydal to which we shall proceed after having put these letters in the post office. I long to be at Carlisle, as I expect there a letter from George and one from you. Let any of my friends see my letters—they may not be interested in descriptions—descriptions are bad at all times—I did not intend to give you any; but how can I help it? I am anxious you should taste a little of our pleasure; it may not be an unpleasant thing, as you have not the fatigue. I am well in health. Direct henceforth to Port Patrick till the 12th July. Content that probably three or four pair of eyes whose owners I am rather partial to will run over these lines I remain; and moreover that I am your affectionate brother John.

72. To GEORGE KEATS. *Saturday and Sunday 27–8 June 1818.*

*Address:* Mr George Keats | Crown Inn | Liverpool.

*Imperfect postmarks:* KESWICK and LIVERPOOL JY

Foot of Helvellyn. June 27

My dear George,

We have passed from Lancaster ~~from~~ to Burton from

72. This letter reached Liverpool too late to catch George; it was re-directed in red ink to Messrs. Frampton & Son, Leadenhall Street, London,

Burton to En⟨d⟩moor, from En⟨d⟩moor to Kendal from Kendal to Bownes⟨s⟩ on turning down to which place there burst upon us the most beautiful and rich view of Winander mere and the surrounding Mountains—we dined at Bownes⟨s⟩ on Trout which I took an oar to fetch from some Box preserves close on one of the little green Islands. After dinner we walked to Ambleside down a beautiful shady Lane along the Borders of the Lake with ample opportunity for Glimpses all the way. We slept at Ambleside not above two Miles from Rydal the Residence of Wordsworth—We arose not very early on account of having marked this day for a day of rest. Before breakfast we visited the first waterfall I ever saw and certainly small as it is it surpassed my expectation, in what I have mentioned in my letter to Tom, in its tone and intellect its light shade slaty Rock, Moss and Rock weed—but you will see finer ones I will not describe by comparison a teapot spout. We ate a Monstrous Breakfast on our return (which by the way I do every morning) and after it proceeded to Wordsworths He was not at home nor was any Member of his family. I was much disappointed. I wrote a note for him and stuck it up over what I knew must be Miss Wordsworth's Portrait and set forth again—we visited two Waterfalls in the neighbourhood, and then went along by Rydal Water and Grasmere through its beautiful Vale—then through a defile in the Mountains into Cumberland and So to the foot of Helvellyn whose summit is out of sight four Miles off rise above rise. I have seen Kirkstone, Loughrigg and Silver How—and discovered without a hint “that ancient woman seated on Helm Craig.”<sup>1</sup> This is the summary of what I have written to Tom and dispatched from Ambleside—I have had a great confidence in your being well able to support the fatigue of your Journey since I have felt how much new Objects contribute to keep off a sense of Ennui and fatigue 14 Miles here is not so much as the 4 from Hampstead to London. You will have an inexhaustible astonishment; with that and such a Companion you will be cheered on from day to day—I hope you will not have sail'd before this Letter reaches you—

and was returned to John, who mentioned this fact in his journal letter to George of September 1819. It is endorsed in the handwriting of Thomas Keats—“To be sent to George”.

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, ‘Poems on the Naming of Places. II. To Joanna’, l. 56.

yet I do not know for I will have my Series to Tom coppied and sent to you by the first Packet you have from England. God send you both as good Health as I have now. Ha! my dear Sister George I wish I knew what humour you were in that I might accom(m)odate myself to any one of your Amiabilities. Shall it be a Sonnet or a Pun or an Acrostic, a Riddle or a Ballad—'perhaps it may turn out a Sang, and perhaps turn out a Sermon'<sup>1</sup> I'll write you on my word the first and most likely the last I ever shall do, because it has struck me—what shall it be about?

Give me your patience Sister while I frame  
Enitials \* \* \*<sup>2</sup>-wise of your golden name:  
Or sue the fair Apollo and he will  
Rouse from his slumber heavy and instill  
Great Love in me for thee and Poesy.  
Imagine not that greatest Mastery  
And Kingdom over all the realms of verse  
Nears more to heaven in aught than when we nurse  
And surety give to  
~~In its vast safety~~ Love and Brotherhood.

Anthropopagi in Othello's Mood,  
Ulysses stormed, and his enchanted Belt  
~~By the sweet Muse are never never felt~~  
Glow with the Muse but they are never felt  
Unbosom'd so, and so eternal made,  
Such selfsame insence in their Laurel shade  
To all the regent sisters of the Nine  
As this poor offering to thee Sister mine.

Kind Sister! Aye this third name says you are  
Entranced has it been the Lord knows where.  
Ah! may it taste to you like good old wine—  
Take you to real happiness and give  
Sons daughters and a Home like honied hive.

<sup>1</sup> Burns, 'Epistle to a Young Friend', ll. 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> This word is incomplete; it begins with 'ves', or possibly 'nes', followed by a mark that may be an 'r' or an undotted 'i'. Probably Keats intended to write 'verse-wise'. In the journal letter to George Keats of September 1819 (p. 408) the line was altered to—

'Exact in Capitals your golden name.'

Other changes were 'slumber heavy' in l. 4 to 'heavy slumber'; 'Such selfsame insence' in l. 14 to 'Such tender insepce'; 'to thee' in l. 16 to 'to you'; 'Entranced', l. 18, to 'Enchanted'; and 'Ah! may it taste', l. 19, to 'And may it taste'.

June 28<sup>th</sup> I have slept and walked eight miles to Breakfast at Keswick on derwent water—We could not mount Helvellyn for the mist so gave it up with hopes of Skiddaw which we shall try tomorrow if it be fine—today we shall walk round Derwent water, and in our Way see the Falls of Low-dore—The Approach to derwent water is rich and magnificent beyond any means of conception—the Mountains all round sublime and graceful and rich in colour—Woods and wooded Islands here and there—at the same time in the distance among Mountains of another aspect we see Bassenthwaite—I *<shall>* drop like a Hawk on the Post Office at Carlisle *<page torn>* some Letters from you and Tom.

Sweet sweet is the greeting of eyes,  
And sweet is the voice in its greeting,  
When Adieux have grown old and goodbyes  
Fade away where old time is retreating—

Warm the nerve of a welcoming hand  
And earnest a Kiss on the Brow,  
When we meet over sea and o'er Land  
Where furrows are new to the Plough.

This is all *<torn>* in the m *<torn>* please a *<torn>* Letters as possi<sup><ble></sup>. We will before many Years are over have written many folio volumes which as a Matter of self-defence to one whom you understand intends to be immortal in the best points and let all his Sins and peccadillos die away—I mean to say that the Booksellers will rather decline printing ten folio volumes of Correspondence printed as close as the Apostles creed in a Watch paper—I have been looking out my dear Georgy for a joke or a Pun for you—there is none but the Names of romantic Misses on the Inn window Panes. You will of course have given me directions brother George where to direct on the other side of the Water. I have not had time to write to Henry—for I have a journal to keep for Tom nearly enough to employ all my leisure—I am a day behind hand with him—I scarcely know how I shall manage Fanny and two or three others I have promised—We expect to be in Scotland in at most three days so you must if this should catch you before you set sail give me a line to Port-Patrick.

God bless you my dear Brother and Sister.

John—

73. To THOMAS KEATS. Monday 29 June (1818).

Address: Mr Thomas Keats Hampstead.

Postmark: not recorded.

Keswick, June 29

My dear Tom,

I cannot make my Journal as distinct and actual as I could wish, from having been engaged in writing to George. and therefore I must tell you without circumstance that we proceeded from Ambleside to Rydal, saw the Waterfall there, and called on Wordsworth, who was not at home, nor was any one of his family. I wrote a note and left it on the mantle-piece. Thence on we came to the foot of Helvellyn, where we slept, but could not ascend it for the mist. I must mention that from Rydal we passed Thirlswater, and a fine pass in the Mountains from Helvellyn we came to Keswick on Derwent Water. The approach to Derwent Water surpassed Winandermere—it is richly wooded and shut in with rich-toned Mountains. From Helvellyn to Keswick was eight miles to Breakfast, after which we took a complete circuit of the Lake going about ten miles, and seeing on our way the Fall of Lowdore. I had an easy climb among the streams, about the fragments of Rocks, and should have got I think to the summit, but unfortunately I was damped by slipping one leg into a squashy hole. There is no great body of water, but the accompaniment is delightful; for it oozes out from

73. Lord Houghton makes the following observations before the letters from the North which he published in 1848:—"The agreeable diversion to his somewhat monotonous life by a walking-tour through the Lakes and Highlands with his friend Mr. Brown, was now put into execution. They set off in the middle of June for Liverpool, where they parted with George Keats, who embarked with his wife for America. On the road he stopped to see a former fellow-student at Guy's, who was settled as a surgeon in a country town, and whom he informed that he had definitely abandoned that profession and intended to devote himself to poetry. Mr. Stephens remembers that he seemed much delighted with his new sister-in-law, who was a person of most agreeable appearance, and introduced her with evident satisfaction. From Lancaster they started on foot, and Mr. Brown has recorded the rapture of Keats when he became sensible, for the first time, of the full effect of mountain scenery. At a turn of the road above Bowness, where the Lake of Windermere first bursts on the view, he stopped as if stupefied with beauty. That evening he read aloud the Poem of the "Pot of Basil", which he had just completed. His disappointment at missing Wordsworth was very great, and he hardly concealed his vexation when he found that he owed the privation to the interest which the elder poet was taking in the general Election. This annoyance would perhaps have been diminished if the two poets had happened to be on the same side in politics; but, as it was, no views and objects could be more opposed." The political difference perhaps also accounts for Wordsworth's presence in his mind when composing "The Gadfly" (see Letter 78, p. 185).

a cleft in perpendicular Rocks, all fledged with Ash and other beautiful trees.<sup>1</sup> It is a strange thing how they got there. At the south end of the Lake, the Mountains of Borrowdale<sup>2</sup> are perhaps as fine as any thing we have seen. On our return from this circuit, we ordered dinner, and set forth about a mile and a half on the Penrith road, to see the Druid temple.<sup>3</sup> We had a fag up hill, rather too near dinner time, which was rendered void by the gratification of seeing those aged stones, on a gentle rise in the midst of Mountains, which at that time darkened all round, except at the fresh opening of the vale of St. John. We went to bed rather fatigued, but not so much so as to hinder us getting up this morning, to mount Skiddaw. It promised all along to be fair, and we had fagged and tugged nearly to the top, when at halfpast six there came a Mist upon us and shut out the view; we did not however lose anything by it, we were high enough without mist, to see the coast of Scotland; the Irish Sea; the hills beyond Lancaster; and nearly all the large ones of Cumberland and Westmoreland, particularly Helvellyn and Scawfell. It grew colder and colder as we ascended, and we were glad at about three parts of the way to taste a little rum which the Guide brought with him, mixed, mind ye with Mountain water. I took two glasses going and one returning. It is about six miles from where I am writing to the top. So we have walked ten miles before Breakfast to-day. We went up with two others, very good sort of fellows, All felt on arising into the cold air, that same elevation, which a cold bath gives one. I felt as if I were going to a Tournament.

Wordsworth's house is situated just on the rise of the foot of mount Rydall, his parlor window looks directly down Winandermere; I do not think I told you how fine the vale of Grassmere is, and how I discovered "the ancient woman seated on Helm Crag"<sup>4</sup>—We shall proceed immediately to Carlisle, intending to enter Scotland on the 1st of July viâ—

*July 1st.*—We are this morning at Carlisle. After Skiddaw, we walked to Ireby, the oldest Market town in Cumberland—where we were greatly amused by a Country Dancing School holden at the Inn, it was indeed "no new

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Ode to Psyche', ll. 54-5.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey has *Bunowdale*, or it might be *Burrowdale*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'Hyperion', ii. 34-5.

<sup>4</sup> See note 1 to Letter 72, p. 157.

cotillon fresh from France".<sup>1</sup> No, they kickit and jumpit with mettle extraordinary, and whiskit, and friskit, and toed it and go'd it, and twirld it, and whirl'd it, and stamp't it, and sweated it, tattooing the floor like mad; The difference between our Country Dances and these Scotch figures is about the same as leisurely stirring a cup o' Tea and beating up a batter pudding. I was extremely gratified to think, that if I had pleasures they knew nothing of, they had also some into which I could not possibly enter. I hope I shall not return without having got the Highland fling, there was as fine a row of boys and girls as you ever saw, some beautiful faces, and one exquisite mouth. I never felt so near the glory of Patriotism, the glory of making by any means a Country happier.<sup>2</sup> This is what I like better than scenery. I fear our continued moving from place to place, will prevent our becoming learned in village affairs; we are mere creatures of Rivers, Lakes, and Mountains. Our yesterday's journey was from Ireby to Wigton, and from Wigton to Carlisle. The Cathedral does not appear very fine; the Castle is very Ancient, and of Brick The city is very various, old white washed narrow streets: broad red brick ones more modern—I will tell you anon, whether the inside of the cathedral is worth looking at. It is built of a sandy red stone or Brick. We have now walked 114 miles and are merely a little tired in the thighs, and a little blistered; We shall ride 38 miles to Dumfries, where we shall linger a while, about Nithsdale and Galloway, I have written two letters to Liverpool. I found a letter from sister George—very delightful indeed. I shall preserve it in the bottom of my knapsack for you.

—On visiting the Tomb of Burns—

The Town, the churchyard, and the setting sun,  
 The Clouds, the trees, the rounded hills all seem  
 Though beautiful, Cold—Strange—as in a dream,  
 I dreamed long ago, now new begun  
 The short-liv'd, paly Summer is but won  
 From Winter's ague, for one hour's gleam;  
 Though sapphire warm, their Stars do never beam,  
 All is Cold Beauty; pain is never done

<sup>1</sup> Burns, 'Tam o' Shanter', l. 116. In his description of the dancing-school in his 'Northern Tour' Brown quotes the same passage correctly.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Epistle to George Keats', ll. 73 ff.

For who has mind to relish Minos-wise,  
 The real of Beauty, free from that dead hue  
 Sickly imagination and sick pride  
 Cast<sup>1</sup> wan upon it! Burns! with honor due  
 I have oft honoured thee. Great shadow; hide  
 Thy face, I sin against thy native skies.

You will see by this sonnet that I am at Dumfries, we have dined in Scotland. Burns's tomb is in the Church-yard corner, not ~~very~~ much to my taste, though on a scale, large enough to show they wanted to honour him. M<sup>rs</sup> Burns lives in this place, most likely we shall see her tomorrow. This Sonnet I have written in a strange mood, half asleep. I know not how it is, the Clouds, the Sky, the Houses, all seem Anti Grecian and Anti Charlemagnish—I will endeavour to get rid of my prejudices, and tell you fairly about the Scotch<sup>2</sup>—

July 2<sup>nd</sup>. In Devonshire they say "Well where be ye going?"<sup>3</sup> Here it is, "How is it all wi' yoursel?" A Man on the Coach said the horses took a Hellish heap o' drivin'—the same fellow pointed out Burns's tomb with a deal of life, "There de ye see it, amang the trees; white, wi' a roond tap." The first well dressed Scotchman we had any conversation with, to our surprise confessed himself a Deist. The careful manner of his delivering his opinions, not before he had received several encouraging hints from us, was very amusing. Yesterday was an immense Horse fair at Dumfries, so that we met numbers of men and women on the road, the women nearly all barefoot, with their Shoes and clean stockings in hand, ready to put on and look smart in the Towns. There are plenty of wretched Cottages where smoke has no outlet but by the door—We have now begun upon Whiskey, called here *Whuskey*,—very smart stuff it is—Mixed like our liquors, with sugar

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey has a blank, and says: 'Note. An illegible word occurs here.'

<sup>2</sup> In the memoir of Charles Wentworth Dilke prefixed by his grandson Sir Charles Dilke to 'Papers of a Critic', it is recorded that Brown wrote thus from Scotland in July 1818 to the subject of the memoir: 'Keats has been these five hours abusing the Scotch and their country. He says that the women have large splay feet, which is too true to be controverted, and that he thanks Providence he is not related to a Scot, nor any way connected with them.' Brown was himself of Scotch descent; and it would accord with his prevalent humour if this were his own embroidery on the state of mind betrayed in the text.—H.B.F.

<sup>3</sup> This is not accurate: but, as *u* in Devonshire is pronounced as in *tu* (French) or *übel* (German), Keats may have taken 'You' for 'Ye'.—H.B.F.



and water, 'tis called toddy, very pretty drink, and much praised by Burns.

74. To FANNY KEATS. *Thursday—Saturday 2–4 July 1818.*

*Address:* Miss F. M. Keats | Rich<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow | Middx.

*Imperfect postmarks:* NEWTON STEWART and JY 1818.

Dumfries July 2<sup>nd</sup>

My dear Fanny,

I intended to have written to you from Kirk(c)udbright the town I shall be in tomorrow—but I will write now because my Knapsack has worn my coat in the Seams, my coat has gone to the Taylors and I have but one Coat to my back in these parts. I must tell you how I went to Liverpool with George and our new Sister and the Gentleman my fellow traveller through the Summer and Autumn—We had a tolerable journey to Liverpool—which I left the next morning before George was up for Lancaster—Then we set off from Lancaster on foot with our Knapsacks on, and have walked a Little zig zag through the mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland—We came from Carlisle yesterday to this place—We are employed in going up Mountains, looking at Strange towns prying into old ruins and eating very hearty breakfasts. Here we are full in the Midst of broad Scotch 'How is it a' wi' yoursel'—the Girls are walking about bare footed and in the worst cottages the Smoke finds its way out of the door. I shall come home full of news for you and for fear I should choak you by too great a dose at once I must make you used to it by a letter or two. We have been taken for travelling Jewellers, Razor sellers and Spectacle venders because friend Brown wears a pair—The first place we stopped at with our Knapsacks contained one Richard Bradshaw a notorious tippler—He stood in the shape of a 3 and ballanced himself as well as he could saying with his nose right in M<sup>r</sup> Browns face 'Do—yo—u sell Spect—ta—cles?' M<sup>r</sup> Abbey says we are Don Quixotes—tell him we are more generally taken for Pedlars. All I hope is that we may not be taken for excisemen in this whiskey country—We are generally up about 5 walking before breakfast and we complete our 20 Miles before dinner—Yesterday we visited Burns's Tomb and this

morning the fine Ruins of Lincluden—I had done thus far when my coat came back fortified at all points—so as we lose no time we set forth again through Galloway—all very pleasant and pretty with no fatigue when one is used to it—We are in the midst of Meg Merrilies' country of whom I suppose you have heard—

Old Meg she was a Gipse  
And liv'd upon the Moors  
Her bed it ~~was~~ the brown heath turf  
And her house was out of doors  
Her apples were swart blackberries  
Her currants pods o' broom  
Her wine was dew o' the wild white rose  
Her book a churchyard tomb  
Her Brothers were the craggy hills  
Her Sisters larchen trees—  
Alone ~~whit~~ with her great family  
She liv'd as she did please.

No breakfast had she many a ~~day~~ morn  
No dinner many a noon,  
And 'stead of supper she would stare  
Full hard against the Moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh  
She made her garlanding  
And every night the dark glen Yew  
She wove and she would sing.

And ~~sometimes~~ with her fingers old and brown  
She plaited Mats o' Rushes  
And gave them to the Cottagers  
She met among the Bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen  
And tall as Amazon:  
An old red blanket cloak she wore;  
A chip hat had she on.  
God rest her aged bones somewhere—  
She died full long ago!

If you like these sort of Ballads I will now and then scribble one for you—if I send any to Tom I'll tell him to send them to you. I have so many interruptions that

I cannot manage to fill a Letter in one day—since I scribbled the Song we have walked through a beautiful Country to Kirk(c)udbright—at which place I will write you a song about myself—

There was a naughty Boy  
A naughty boy was he  
He would not stop at home  
He could not quiet be—

He took  
In his Knapsack  
A Book  
Full of vowels  
And a shirt  
With some towels—  
A slight cap  
For night cap—  
A hair brush  
Comb ditto  
New Stockings  
For old ones  
Would split O!  
This Knapsack  
Tight at 's back  
He rivetted close  
And followéd his Nose  
To the North  
To the North  
And follow'd his nose  
To the North.

There was a naughty boy  
And a naughty boy was he  
For nothing would he do  
But scribble poetry—

He took  
An inkstand  
In his hand  
And a Pen  
Big as ten  
In the other  
And away  
In a Pother  
He ran

To the mountains  
 And fountains  
 And ghostes  
 And Postes  
 And witches  
 And ditches  
 And wrote  
 In his coat  
 When the weather  
 Was ~~warm~~ cool  
 Fear of gout—  
 And without  
 When the w(e)ather  
 Was ~~cool~~ warm—  
 Och the charm  
 When we choose  
 To follow ones nose  
 To the north  
 To the north  
 To follow one's nose to the north!

There was a naughty boy  
 And a naughty boy we ⟨*for* was⟩ he  
 He kept little fishes  
 In washing tubs three  
 In spite  
 Of the might  
 Of the Maid  
 Nor affraid  
 Of his Granny-good—  
 He often would  
 Hurly burly  
 Get up early  
 And go  
 By hook or crook  
 To the brook  
 And bring home  
 Miller's thumb  
 Tittle bat  
 Not over fat  
 Minnows small  
 As the stall

Of a glove  
Not above  
The size  
Of a nice  
Little Baby's  
Little finger—  
O he made  
'Twas his trade  
Of Fish a pretty Kettle  
A Kettle—A Kettle  
Of Fish a pretty Kettle  
A Kettle!

There was a naughty Boy  
And a naughty Boy was he  
He ran away to Scotland  
The people for to see—  
There he found  
That the ground  
Was as hard  
That a yard  
Was as long,  
That a song  
Was as merry,  
That a cherry  
Was as red—  
That lead  
Was as weighty  
That fourscore  
Was as eighty  
That a door  
Was as wooden  
As in england—  
So he stood in  
His shoes  
And he wonderd  
He wonderd  
He stood in his  
Shoes and he wonder'd.

My dear Fanny I am ashamed of writing you such stuff, nor would I if it were not for being tired after my day's walking, and ready to tumble into bed so fatigued

that when I am asleep you might sew my nose to my great toe and trundle me round the town like a Hoop without waking me—Then I get so hungry—a Ham goes but a very little way and fowls are like Larks to me—A Batch of Bread I make no more ado with than a sheet of parliament; and I can eat a Bull's head as easily as I used to do Bull's eyes—I take a whole string of Pork Sausages down as easily as a Pen'orth of Lady's fingers<sup>1</sup>—Oh dear I must soon be contented with an acre or two of oaten cake a hogshead of Milk and a Cloaths basket of Eggs morning noon and night when I get among the Highlanders—Before we see them we shall pass into Ireland and have a chat with the Paddies, and look at the Giant's Cause-way which you must have heard of—I have not time to tell you particularly for I have to send a Journal to Tom of whom you shall hear all particulars or from me when I return. Since I began this we have walked sixty miles to newton stewart at which place I put in this Letter—to ~~day~~ night we sleep at Glenluce—tomorrow at Portpatrick and the next day we shall cross in the passage boat to Ireland—I hope Miss Abbey has quite recovered—Present my Respects to her and to M<sup>r</sup> And M<sup>rs</sup> Abbey—God bless you—

Your affectionate Brother John—

Do write me a Letter directed to *Inverness*. Scotland—

75. To THOMAS KEATS. *Friday 3—Thursday 9 July 1818.*<sup>2</sup>  
*Address: M<sup>r</sup> Thos. Keats | Well Walk | Hampstead | Middx—*  
*Imperfect postmarks: 1818 and jv 13.*

Auchencairn July 3<sup>rd</sup>

My dear Tom,

I have not been able to keep up my journal completely on accou(n)t of other letters to George and one which I am writing to Fanny from which I have turned to loose no time whilst Brown is copying a song about Meg Merrilies which I have just written for her—We are now in Meg Merrilies county and have this morning passed through some parts exactly suited to her—Kirk(c)ud-

<sup>1</sup> A kind of sweetmeat.

<sup>2</sup> Tom endorsed this letter—'Received 13 July  
 Answered „ „  
 No 3—from John.'

bright County is very beautiful, very wild with craggy hills somewhat in the westmoreland fashion—We have come down from Dumfries to the Sea Coast part of it—The song I mention you would have from Dilke: but perhaps you would like it here—

Old Meg she was a Gipsy  
And liv'd upon the Moors;  
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,  
And her house was out of doors.  
Her apples were swart blackberries,  
Her currants pods o' Broom,  
Her wine was dew o' the wild white rose,  
Her book a churchyard tomb.  
Her brothers were the craggy hills,  
Her Sisters larchen trees—  
Alone with her great family  
She liv'd as she did please.  
No Breakfast had she many a morn,  
No dinner many a noon;  
And 'stead of supper she would stare  
Full hard against the Moon.  
But every Morn, of wood bine fresh  
She made her garlanding;  
And every night the dark glen Yew  
She wove and she would sing.  
And with her fingers old and brown  
She plaited Mats o' Rushes,  
And gave them to the Cottagers  
She met among the Bushes.  
Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen  
And tall as Amazon:  
An old red blanket cloak she wore  
A chip hat had she on—  
God rest her aged bones somewhere  
She died full long ago!

---

Now I will return to Fanny—it rains. I may have time to go on here presently. July 5—You see I have missed a day from fanny's Letter. Yesterday was passed in Kir(k)cudbright—the Country is very rich—very fine and with a little of Devon—I am now writing at Newton Stuart six Miles into Wigton—Our Landlady of yesterday said very

few Southrens passed these ways. The children jabber away as in a foreign Language—The barefooted Girls look very much in keeping—I mean with the Scenery about them. Brown praises their cleanliness and appearance of comfort—the neatness of their cottages &c It may be—they are very squat among trees and fern and heaths and broom, on levels, slopes and heights—They are very pleasant because they are very primitive—but I wish they were as snug as those up the Devonshire vallies. We are lodged and entertained in great varieties—we dined yesterday on dirty bacon dirtier eggs and dirtiest Potatoes with a slice of Salmon—we breakfast this morning in a nice carpeted Room with Sofa hair bottomed chairs and green-baized mehogany—A spring by the road side is always welcome—we drink water for dinner diluted with a Gill of wiskey. July 7<sup>th</sup> Yesterday Morning we set out from Glenluce going some distance round to see some Ruins—they were scarcely worth the while—we went on towards Stranrawier in a burning Sun and had gone about six Miles when the Mail overtook us—we got up—were at Portpatrick in a jiffy, and I am writing now in little Ireland—The dialect on the neighbouring shores of Scotland and Ireland is much the same—yet I can perceive a great difference in the nations from the Chambermaid at this nate Inn kept by Mr Kelly. She is fair, kind and ready to laugh, because she is out of the horrible dominion of the Scotch Kirk. A Scotch Girl stands in terrible awe of the Elders—poor little Susannas—They will scarcely laugh—they are greatly to be pitied and the Kirk is greatly to be damn'd. These Kirkmen have done Scotland good (Query?) they have made Men, Women, Old Men Young Men old Women young women boys, girls and infants all careful—so that they are formed into regular Phalanges of savers and gainers—such a thrifty army cannot fail to enrich their Country and give it a greater appe(a)rance of comfort than that of their poor irish neighbours—These Kirkmen have done Scotland harm—they have banished puns and laughing and Kissing (except in cases where the very danger and crime must make it very fine and gustful.<sup>1</sup> I shall make a full stop at Kissing for after that there should be a better parent thesis: and go on to remind you

<sup>1</sup> Brown gave his views on the 'State of Religion in the Highlands' in an article in 'The New Monthly Magazine', 1822, vol. iv, pp. 329-33.



of the fate of Burns. Poor unfortunate fellow—his disposition was Southern—how sad it is when a luxurious imagination is obliged in self defence to deaden its delicacy in vulgarity, and not<sup>1</sup> in things attainable that it may not have leisure to go mad after things which are not. No Man in such matters will be content with the experience of others—It is true that out of suffrance there is no greatness, no dignity; that in the most abstracted Pleasure there is no lasting happiness: yet who would not like to discover over again that Cleopatra was a Gipsy, Helen a Rogue and Ruth a deep one? I have not sufficient reasoning faculty to settle the doctrine of thrift—as it is consistent with the dignity of human Society—with the happiness of Cottagers—All I can do is by plump contrasts—Were the fingers made to squeeze a guinea or a white hand? Were the Lips made to hold a pen or a Kiss? and yet in Cities Man is shut out from his fellows if he is poor, the Cottager must be dirty and very wretched if she be not thrifty—The present state of society demands this and this convinces me that the world is very young and in a verry ignorant state—We live in a barbarous age. I would sooner be a wild deer than a Girl under the dominion of the Kirk, and I would sooner be a wild hog than be the occasion of a Poor Creatures pennance before those execrable elders. It is not so far to the Giant's Cause way as we supposed—we thought it 70, and hear it is only 48 Miles—so we shall leave one of our Knapsacks here at Donoghadee, take our immediate wants and be back in a week—when we shall proceed to the County of Ayr. In the Packet Yesterday we heard some Ballads from two old Men—one was a romance which seemed very poor—then there was the Battle of the Boyne—then Robin Huid as they call him—‘Before the King you shall go, go, go, before the King you shall go’. There were no Letters for me at Port Patrick so I am behind hand with you I dare say in news from George. Direct to Glasgow till the 17<sup>th</sup> of this month.

9<sup>th</sup> We stopped very little in Ireland and that you may not have leisu(r)e to marvel at our speedy return to Portpatrick I will tell you that is it as dear living in Ireland as at the Hummums<sup>2</sup>—thrice the expence of Scotland—it

<sup>1</sup> This ‘not’ is clearly a slip.

<sup>2</sup> This once renowned London hotel existed till recently in the Piazza, Covent Garden.

would have cost us £15 before our return—Moreover we found those 48 Miles to be irish ones which reach to 70 english—So having walked to Belfast one day and back to Donoghadee the next we left Ireland with a fair breeze—We slept last night at Port patrick where I was gratified by a letter from you. On our walk in Ireland we had too much opportunity to see the worse than nakedness, the rags, the dirt and misery of the poor common Irish—A Scotch cottage, though in that sometimes the Smoke has no exit but at the door, is a pallace to an irish one. We could observe that impetiosity in Man <B>oy and Woman. We had the pleasure of finding our way through a Peat-Bog—three miles long at least—dreary, black, dank, flat and spongy: here and there were poor dirty creatures and a few strong men cutting or carting peat. We heard on passing into Belfast through a most wretched suburb that most disgusting of all noises worse than the Bag pipe, the laugh of a Monkey, the chatter of women *solus* the scream of <a> Macaw—I mean the sound of the Shuttle. What a tremendous difficulty is the improvement of the condition of such people. I cannot conceive how a mind ‘with child’<sup>1</sup> of Philant<h>ropy could gra<s>p at possibility—with me it is absolute despair. At a miserable house of entertainment half way between Donaghadee and Bellfast were two Men Sitting at Whiskey—one a Laborer and the other I took to be a drunken Weaver—The Laborer took me for a Frenchman and the other hinted at Bounty Money saying he was ready to take it. On calling for the Letters at Port patrick the man snapp’d out ‘what Regiment’? On our return from Bellfast we met a Sadan—the Duchess of Dunghill—It is no laughing matter tho—Imagine the worst dog kennel you ever saw placed upon two poles from a mouldy fencing. In such a wretched thing sat a squalid old Woman squat like an ape half starved from a scarcity of Buiscuit in its passage from Madagascar to the cape,—with a pipe in her mouth and looking out with a round-eyed skinny lidded inanity—with a sort of horizontal idiotic movement of her head—squab and lean she sat and puff’d out the smoke while two ragged tattered Girls carried her along. What a thing would be a history of her Life and sensations. I shall endeavour when I know more and have though<t> a little more, to

<sup>1</sup> Spenser, ‘Faerie Queene’, I. v. 1, 2.

give you my ideas of the difference between the scotch and irish<sup>1</sup>—The two Irishmen I mentioned were speaking of their treatment in England when the Weaver said—‘Ah you were a civil Man but I was a drinker’ Remember me to all—I intend writing to Haslam—but dont tell him for fear I should delay—We left a notice at Portpatrick that our Letters should be thence forwarded to Glasgow—Our quick return from Ireland will occasion our passing Glasgow sooner than we thought—so till further notice you must direct to Inverness

Your most affectionate Brother John—

Remember me to the Bentleys

76. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Saturday 11–Monday 13 July 1818.*

*Address:* Mr J H Reynolds | Little Britain | Christs Hospital | London.

*Postmark:* not recorded.

Maybole July 11

My Dear Reynolds.

I’ll not run over the ground we have passed, that would be merely as bad as telling a dream—unless perhaps I do it in the manner of the Laputan printing press—that is I put down Mountains, Rivers Lakes, dells, Glens, Rocks, and Clouds, with beautiful enchanting, Gothic picturesque fine, delightful, enchanting, Grand, sublime—a few Blisters, &c.—and now you have our journey thus far: where I begin a letter to you because I am approaching Burns’s Cottage very fast—We have made continual enquiries from the time we saw his Tomb at Dumfries—his name of course is known all about—his great reputation among the plodding people is “that he wrote a good *mony* sensible things”—One of the pleasantest means of annulling self is approaching such a shrine as the Cottage of Burns—we need not think of his misery—that is all gone—bad luck to it—I shall look upon it hereafter with unmixed pleasure as I do upon my Stratford on Avon day with Bailey.<sup>2</sup> I shall fill this sheet for you in the Bardie’s

<sup>1</sup> See Letter 77—the part dated the 11th of July 1818, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Amy Lowell, in ‘John Keats’, i. 510, says that the visit to Stratford-on-Avon took place on Thursday the 2nd of October 1817, ‘for their signatures appear under that date in the visitors’ book of Holy Trinity Church’. The

Country, going no further than this till I get into the Town of Ayr which will be a 9 miles' walk to Tea—(13 July) We were talking on different and indifferent things, when on a sudden we turned a corner upon the immediate Country of Ayr—the Sight was as rich as possible—I had no Conception that the native place of Burns was so beautiful—the Idea I had was more desolate, his rigs of Barley seemed always to me but a few strips of Green on a cold hill—O prejudice! it was rich as Devon—I endeavour'd to drink in the Prospect, that I might spin it out to you as the Silkworm makes silk from Mulber(r)y leaves—I cannot recollect it—Besides all the Beauty, there were the Mountains of Arran Isle, black and huge over the Sea—We came down upon every thing suddenly—there were in our way, the “bonny Doon”, with the Brig that Tam O' Shanter crossed—Kirk Alloway, Burns's Cottage and then the Brigs of Ayr—First we stood upon the Bridge across the Doon; surrounded by every Phantasy of Green in tree, Meadow, and Hill,—the Stream of the Doon, as a Farmer told us, is covered with trees from head to foot<sup>1</sup>—you know those beautiful heaths so fresh against the weather of a summers evening—there was one stretching along behind the trees. I wish I knew always the humour my friends would be in at opening a letter of mine, to suit it to them (as) nearly as possible. I could always find an egg shell for Melancholy<sup>2</sup> and as for Merriment a Witty humour will turn any thing to Account—My head is sometimes in such a whirl in considering the million likings and antipathies of our Moments—that I can get into no settled strain in my Letters—My Wig! Burns and sentimentality coming across you and frank Floodgate<sup>3</sup> in the office—

visitors' book is no longer there, and Bailey, writing to Lord Houghton, said nothing about it. What Bailey did say was that they went 'to the house visited by so many thousands of all nations of Europe' and inscribed their names on the walls. They 'also visited the Church and were pestered with a common-place showman of the place'. Canon Melville tells me that it is not unlikely that some old custodian had a book of his own which was taken away when he died or left.

<sup>1</sup> I have heard a Scot, far from illiterate, describe a smoked salmon as 'split from head till foot'.—H.B.F.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'As You Like It', II. v. 13, 14.

<sup>3</sup> C. W. Dilke records that Reynolds was originally a clerk in an Insurance Office in Serjeant's Inn. 'Rice', he says, 'suggested that he should become a lawyer, and his relation, Mr. Fladgate,—himself a literary man in early life and editor of the "Sun" newspaper consented to receive him as an Articled Pupil, and dear generous noble James Rice—the best, and in his

O scenery that thou shouldst be crush'd between two Puns—As for them I venture the rascalliest in the Scotch Region—I hope Brown does not put them punctually in his journal—If he does I must sit on the cutty-stool all next winter. We went to Kirk allow'y "a Prophet is no Prophet in his own Country"—We went to the Cottage and took some Whiskey—I wrote a sonnet for the mere sake of writing some lines under the Roof—they are so bad I cannot transcribe them—The Man at the Cottage was a great Bore with his Anecdotes—I hate the Rascal—his Life consists in fuz, fuzzy, fuzziest—He drinks glasses five for the Quarter and twelve for the hour,<sup>1</sup>—he is a mahogany faced old Jackass who knew Burns—He ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him. He calls himself "a curious old Bitch"—but he is a flat old Dog—I sho<sup>d</sup> like to employ Caliph Vathek to kick him<sup>2</sup>—O the flummery of a birth place! Cant! Cant! Cant! It is enough

quaint way one of the wittiest and wisest men I ever knew—paid the fee or stamp or whatever it is called—about £110 I believe—and promised if he ever succeeded to his father's business to take him as partner. He not only kept his word, but in a few years gave up the business to him. Reynolds unhappily threw away this certain fortune. The Frank Fladgate here mentioned was Mr. Fladgate's eldest son, then Articled to his father.' Dilke adds that Lady Dryden left Frank Fladgate her fortune. To return for a moment to Reynolds—I presume it was on the occasion above explained that he wrote in the copy of Shakespeare's Poems (now in the Keats Museum, Hampstead) which he afterwards gave to Keats (and in which Keats wrote his 'Bright Star' sonnet) his own 'Farewell to the Muses'—

I have no chill despondence that I am  
Self banished from those rolls of honouring men  
That keep a temperate eye on airy Fame  
And write songs to her with a golden pen.  
I do not wail because the Muses keep  
Their secrets on the top of Helicon  
Nor do I in my wayward moments weep  
That from my youth Romance is past & gone.  
My boat is trimm'd—my sail is set—And I  
Shall coast the shallows of the tide of Time  
And rest me happily—where others lie,  
Who pass oblivious days. No feelings climb  
Ambitiously within me. Sweet Farewell  
Be to those Nymphs that on the old Hill dwell.

14 Feb<sup>r</sup> 1818

J H R

It was a characteristic joke to date this charming sonnet on St. Valentine's Day.—H.B.F.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Coleridge's 'Christabel', l. 10.

<sup>2</sup> 'The rage of Vathek exceeded all bounds on finding . . . his guards lying lifeless all round him. In the paroxysm of his passion he fell furiously on the poor carcasses, and kicked them till ev'ning without intermission.'—Beckford's 'Vathek'.

to give a spirit the guts-ache—Many a true word they say is spoken in jest—this may be because his Gab hindered my sublimity.—The flat dog made me write a flat sonnet.—My dear Reynolds—I cannot write about scenery and visitings—Fancy is indeed less than a present palpable reality, but it is greater than remembrance—you would lift your eyes from Homer only to see close before you the real Isle of Tenedos.—you would rather read Homer afterwards than remember yourself—One song of Burns's is of more worth to you than all I could think for a whole year in his native country.—His Misery is a dead weight upon the nimbleness of one's quill—I tried to forget it—to drink Toddy without any Care—to write a merry Sonnet—it wont do—he talked with Bitches—he drank with blackguards, he was miserable—We can see horribly clear in the works of such a Man his whole life, as if we were God's spies.<sup>1</sup>—What were his addresses to Jean in the latter part of his life—I should not speak so to you—yet why not—you are not in the same case—you are in the right path, and you shall not be deceived—I have spoken to you against Marriage, but it was general. the Prospect in those matters has been to me so blank, that I have not been unwilling to die—I would not now, for I have inducements to Life—I must see my little Nephews in America, and I must see you marry your lovely Wife—My sensations are sometimes deadened for weeks together<sup>2</sup>—but believe me I have more than once yearne'd for the time of your happiness to come, as much as I could for myself after the lips of Juliet.—From the tenor of my occasional rhodomontade in chit-chat, you might have been deceived concerning me in these points—upon my soul, I have been getting more and more close to you every day, ever since I knew you, and now one of the first pleasures I look to is your happy Marriage—the more, since I have felt the pleasure of loving a sister in Law. I did not think it possible to become so much attached in so short a time. Things like these, and they are real,<sup>3</sup> have made me resolve to have a care of my health—you must be as careful—The rain has stopp'd us to day at the end of a dozen Miles, yet we hope to see Loch-Lomond the day after to Morrow;—I will piddle out my information, as Rice says, next Winter at any time

<sup>1</sup> 'King Lear', v. iii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letters 26 and 31, pp. 55 and 69.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 53, p. 111.

when a substitute is wanted for Vingt-un. We bear the fatigue very well.—20 Miles a day in general—A cloud came over us in getting up Skiddaw—I hope to be more lucky in Ben Lomond—and more lucky still in Ben Nevis—What I think you wo<sup>d</sup> enjoy is poking about Ruins, sometimes Abbey, sometimes Castle. The short stay we made in Ireland has left few remembrances—but an old woman<sup>1</sup> in a dog-kennel Sedan with a pipe in her Mouth, is what I can never forget—I wish I may be able to give you an idea of her—Remember me to your Mother and Sisters, and tell your Mother how I hope she will pardon me for having a scrap of paper pasted in the Book sent to her.<sup>2</sup> I was driven on all sides and had not time to call on Taylor—So Bailey is coming to Cumberland—well, if you'll let me know where at Inverness, I <will> call on my return and pass a little time with him—I am glad 'tis not Scotland—Tell my friends I do all I can for them, that is drink their healths in Toddy—Perhaps I may have some lines by and by to send you fresh on your own Letter—Tom has a few to shew you.

Your affectionate friend  
John Keats

77. To THOMAS KEATS, *Friday 10–Tuesday 14 July 1818.*  
*Address:* Mr Tho<sup>s</sup>. Keats | Well Walk | Hampstead | Middx—  
*Postmarks:* GLASGOW 14 JULY, and 17 JY 1818.

Belantree July 10—

Ah! ken ye what I met the day  
Out oure the Mountains  
A coming down by craggi(e)s grey  
An mossie fountains  
A goud hair'd Marie yeve I pray  
Ane minute's guessing—  
For that I met upon the way  
Is past expressing.  
As I stood where a rocky brig  
A torrent crosses  
I spied upon a misty rig  
A troupe o' Horses—

<sup>1</sup> 'The Duchess of Dunghill': see Letter 75, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> A copy of 'Endymion', see Letter 70, pp. 152–3.

77. This Letter is endorsed by Tom—'Rec<sup>d</sup> July 17<sup>th</sup> Ans<sup>d</sup> D<sup>o</sup> D<sup>o</sup>.'

And as they trotted down the glen  
 I sped to meet them  
 To see if I might know the Men  
 To stop and greet them.  
 First Willie on his sleek mare came  
 At canting gallop  
 His long hair rustled like a flame  
 On board a shallop.  
 Then came his brother Rab and then  
 Young Peggy's Mither  
 And Peggy too—adown the glen  
 They went together—  
 I saw her wrappit in her hood  
 Fra wind and raining—  
~~There was a blush upon her~~  
 Her cheek was flush wi timid blood  
 Twixt growth and waning—  
 She turn'd her dazed head full oft  
 For there her Brithers  
 Came riding with her Bridegroom soft  
 And mony ithers.  
 Young Tam came up an' eyed me quick  
 With reddened cheek  
 Braw Tam was daffed like a chick  
 He coud na speak—  
 Ah Marie they are all gane hame  
 Through blustering weather  
 An every heart is ~~light on~~ full on flame  
 An light as feather  
 Ah! Marie they are all gone hame  
 Fra happy wedding,  
 Whilst I—Ah is it not a shame?  
 Sad tears am shedding.<sup>1</sup>

My dear Tom

The reason for my writing these lines was that Brown  
 wanted to impose a galloway song upon dilke—but it  
 wont do. The subject I got from meeting a wedding just  
 as we came down into this place—Where I am affraid we  
 shall be emprisoned awhile by the weather—Yesterday we  
 came 27 Miles from Stranraer—entered Ayrshire a little

<sup>1</sup> No one has yet remarked that this exquisite poem is Keats's first approach to the metre and sentiment of 'La Belle Dame'.



beyond Cairn, and had our path th(r)ough a delightful Country. I shall endeavour that you may follow our steps in this walk—it would be uninteresting in a Book of Travels—it can not be interesting but by my having gone through it. When we left Cairn our Road lay half way up the sides of a green mountainous shore, full of Clefs of verdure and eternally varying—sometimes up sometimes down, and over little Bridges going across green chasms of moss rock and trees—winding about every where. After two or three Miles of this we turned suddenly into a magnificent glen finely wooded in Parts—seven Miles long—with a Mountain Stream winding down the Midst—full of cottages in the most happy Situations—the sides of the Hills covered with sheep—the effect of cattle lowing I never had so finely. At the end we had a gradual ascent and got among the tops of the Mountains whence In a little time I descried in the Sea Ailsa Rock 940 feet high—it was 15 Miles distant and seemed close upon us—The effect of ailsa with the peculiar perspective of the Sea in connection with the ground we stood on, and the misty rain then falling gave me a complete Idea of a deluge. Ailsa struck me very suddenly—really I was a little alarmed—Thus far had I written before we set out this morning. Now we are at Girvan 13 Miles north of Belantree. Our Walk has been along a more grand shore to day than yesterday—Ailsa beside us all the way—From the heights we could see quite at home Cantire and the large Mountains of ~~Arran~~ Annan one of the Hebrides. We are in comfortable Quarters. The Rain we feared held up bravely and it has been ‘fu fine this day’<sup>1</sup>—To-morrow we sh(all be) at Ayr.

To Ailsa Rock.

Hearken thou craggy ocean pyramid,  
 Give answer by thy voice the Sea fowls screams!  
 When were thy shoulders mantled in huge Streams?  
 When from the Sun was thy broad forehead hid?  
 How long ist since the mighty Power bid  
 Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams—  
 Sleep in the Lap of Thunder or Sunbeams,  
 Or when grey clouds are thy cold Coverlid—  
 Thou answerst not for thou art dead asleep  
 Thy Life ~~has been will be~~ is but two dead eternities

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Burns, ‘The Holy Fair’.

The last in Air, the former in the deep—

First with the Whales, last with the eggle skies—

Drown'd wast thou till an Earth quake made thee steep—

Another cannot wake thy giant Size!

This is the only Sonnet of any worth I have of late written—I hope you will like it. 'Tis now the 11th of July and we have come 8 Miles to Breakfast to Kirkoswald. I hope the next Kirk will be Kirk Alloway. I have nothing of consequence to say now concerning our Journey—so I will speak as far as I can judge on the irish and Scotch—I know nothing of the higher Classes—yet I have a persuasion that there the Irish are victorious. As to the 'profanum vulgus' I must incline to the scotch. They never laugh—but they are always comparitively neat and clean. Their constitutions are not so remote and puzzling as the irish. The Scotchman will never give a decision on any point—he will never commit himself in a sentence which may be refer(r)ed to as a meridian in his notion of things—so that you do not know him—and yet you may come in nigher neighbourhood to him than to the irishman who commits himself in so many places that it dazes your head. A Scotchman's motive is more easily discovered than an irishman's. A Scotchman will go wisely about to deceive you, an irishman cunningly. An Irishman would bluster out of any discovery to his disadvantage. ~~An Irishman~~ A Scotchman would retire perhaps without much desire of revenge. An Irishman likes to be thought a gallous fellow. A scotchman is contented with himself. It seems to me they are both sensible of the Character they hold in England and act accordingly to Englishmen. Thus the Scotchman will become over grave and over decent and the Irishman over-impetuous. I like a Scotchman best because he is less of a bore—I like the Irishman best because he ought to be more comfortable—The Scotchman has made up his Mind within himself in a Sort of snail shell wisdom—The Irishman is full of strong headed instinct—The Scotchman is farther in Humanity than the Irishman—there his (for he) will stick perhaps when the Irishman shall be refined beyond him—for the former thinks he cannot be improved the latter would grasp at it for ever, place but the good plain before him. Maybole—Since breakfast we have come only four Miles to dinner, not merely, for we have examined in the way t(wo) Ruins,

one of them very fine called Crossraguel Abbey—there is a winding Staircase to the top of a little Watch Tower. July 13. *Kingswells*—I have been writing to Reynolds—therefore any particulars since Kirkoswald have escaped me—from said Kirk we went to Maybole to dinner—then we set forward to Burnes's town Ayr—the Approach to it is extremely fine—quite outwent my expectations—richly meadowed, wooded, heathed and rivuleted—with a grand Sea view terminated by the black Mountains of the isle of Annan. As soon as I saw them so nearly I said to myself 'How is it they did not beckon Burns to some grand attempt at Epic'—The bonny Doon is the sweetest river I ever saw overhung with fine trees as far as we could see—we stood some time on the Brig across it, over which Tam o' Shanter fled—we took a pinch of snuff on the Key stone—Then we proceeded to the 'auld Kirk Alloway'. As we were looking at it a Farmer pointed out the spots where Mungo's Mither hang'd hersel'<sup>1</sup> and 'drunken Charlie brake's neck's bane'.<sup>2</sup> Then we proceeded to the Cottage he was born in—there was a board to that effect by the door side—it had the same effect as the same sort of memorial at Stradford on Avon<sup>3</sup>—We drank some Toddy to Burns's Memory with an old Man who knew Burns—damn him and damn his Anecdotes—he was a great bore—it was impossible for a Southren to understand above 5 words in a hundred—There was something good in his description of Burns's melancholy the last time he saw him. I was determined to write a sonnet in the Cottage—I did—but it is so bad I cannot venture it here.<sup>4</sup> Next we walked into Ayr Town and before we went to Tea, saw the new Brig and the Auld Brig and Wallace tower—Yesterday we dinned with a Traveller—We were talking about Kean—He said he had seen him at Glasgow 'in Othello in the Jew, I mean er, er, er, the Jew in Shylock' He got bother'd completely in vague ideas of the Jew in Othello, Shylock in the Jew, Shylock in Othello, Othello

<sup>1</sup> 'Tam o' Shanter', l. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., l. 92.

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 76, p. 174, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Houghton gave portions of this paragraph as an extract from a letter to Haydon; but I strongly suspect that the extract, having been furnished by Haydon, was assumed to be from a letter to himself. Possibly Keats wrote the identical paragraph twice to different correspondents, but it would, I think, be rash to expect a letter to Haydon containing it to come to the surface, for it is quite certain that Haydon was in possession of this letter and that it was in his journal at the time of his death.

in Shylock, the Jew in Othello &c &c &c he left himself in a mess at last—Still satisfied with himself he went to the Window and gave an abortive whistle of some tune or other—it might have been Handel. There is no end to these Mistakes—he'll go and tell people how he has seen 'Malvolio in the Countess'—'Twelvth night' in 'Midsummer nights dream'—Bottom in much ado about Nothing—Viola in Barrymore—Antony in Cleopatra—Falstaff in the mouse Trap.<sup>1</sup>—July 14 We enterd Glasgow last Evening under the most oppressive Stare a body could feel—When we had crossed the Bridge Brown look'd back and said its whole pop(ulation) had turned to wonder at us—we came on till a drunken Man came up to me—I put him off with my Arm—he returned all up in Arms saying aloud that, 'he had seen all foreigners bu-u-ut he never saw the like o' me—I was obliged to mention the word Officer and Police before he would desist—The City of Glasgow I take to be a very fine one—I was astonished to hear it was twice the size of Edinburgh—It is built of Stone and has a much more solid appearance than London—We shall see the Cathedral this morning—they have devilled it into a 'High Kirk'—I want very much to know the name of the ship George is g(one) in—also what port he will land in—I know nothing a(bout) it—I hope you are leading a quiet Life and gradually improving. Make a long lounge of the whole Summer—by the time the Leaves fall I shall be near you with plenty of confab—there are a thousand things I cannot write—Take care of yourself—I mean in not being vexed or bothered at any thing—God bless you!

John—

78. To THOMAS KEATS. Friday 17–Tuesday 21 July 1818.  
Address: Mr Tho<sup>s</sup> Keats | Well Walk | Hampstead | Middx—  
*Imperfect postmark*: 30 JY 1818<sup>2</sup>

Cairn-something July 17<sup>th</sup>—

My dear Tom,

Here's Brown going on so that I cannot bring to Mind how the two last days have vanished—for example he says 'The Lady of the Lake went to Rock herself to sleep on Arthur's seat and the Lord of the Isles coming to Press

<sup>1</sup> *King*. What do you call the play?

*Hamlet*. The Mouse-trap.—'Hamlet', iii. ii. 250.

<sup>2</sup> A London postmark. Unfortunately Tom did not endorse this letter.

a Piece and seeing her Assleap remembered their last meeting at Corrystone Water so touching her with one hand on the Vallis Lucis while (t)he other un-Derwent her Whitehaven, Ireby stifled her clack man on, that he might her Anglesea and give her a Buchanan and said'. *(blank)* I told you last how we were stared at in Glasgow—we are not out of the Crowd yet. Steam Boats on Loch Lomond and Barouches on its sides take a little from the Pleasure of such romantic chaps as Brown and I. The Banks of the Clyde are extremely beautiful—the north End of Loch Lomond grand in excess—the entrance at the lower end to the narrow part from a little distance is precious good—the Evening was beautiful nothing could surpass our fortune in the weather—yet was I worldly enough to wish for a fleet of chivalry Barges with Trumpets and Banners just to die away before me into that blue place among the mountains—I must give you an outline as well as I can.<sup>1</sup>



Not B—the Water was a fine Blue silverd and the Mountains a dark purple the Sun setting aslant behind them—meantime the head of ben Lomond was covered with a rich Pink Cloud—We did not ascend Ben Lomond—the price being very high and a half a day of rest being quite acceptable—We were up at 4 this morning and have walked to breakfast 15 Miles through two tremendous Glens—at the end of the first there is a place called rest and be thankful which we took for an Inn—it was nothing but a Stone and so we were cheated into 5 more Miles to Breakfast—I have just been bathing in Loch fine a salt-water Lake opposite the Window—quite pat and fresh but for the cursed Gad flies—damn 'em they have been at me ever since I left the Swan and two necks<sup>2</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> The facsimile shows only a section of Keats's notepaper, hence the apparent discrepancy with the printed text.

<sup>2</sup> The coaching station for the North, in Lad Lane, now a part of Gresham Street.

All gentle folks who owe a grudge  
 To any living thing  
 Open your ears and stay your t(r)udge  
 Whilst I in dudgeon sing—

The gad fly he hath stung me sore  
 O may he ne'er sting you!  
 But we have many a horrid bore  
 He may sting black and blue.

Has any here an old grey Mare  
 With three Legs all her store  
 O put it to her Buttocks bare  
 And Straight she'll run on four

Has any here a Lawyer suit  
 Of 17,43  
 Take Lawyer's nose and put it to't  
 And you the end will see

Is there a Man in Parliament  
 Dum founder'd in his speech  
 O let his neighbour make a rent  
 And put one in his breech

O Lowther<sup>1</sup> how much better thou  
 Hadst figur'd t'other day  
 When to the folks thou madst a bow  
 And had no more to say

If lucky gad fly had but ta'en  
 His seat upon thine A—e  
 And put thee to a little pain  
 To save thee from a worse.

Better than Southey it had been  
 Better than Mr. D——  
 Better than Wordsworth too I ween  
 Better than Mr. V——<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William Lowther, second Earl of Lonsdale (1787–1872), contested a seat for the County of Westmorland with Lord Brougham in 1818. Cf. Letter 71, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth's 'Two Addresses to the Freeholders of Westmorland' are probably glanced at in this stanza; 'Mr. V——' would doubtless be the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nicholas Vansittart, first Baron Bexley (1766–1851); and 'Mr. D——' may perhaps have been Robert Saunders Dundas, second Viscount Melville (1771–1851), who had held office in a previous ministry; but this last name rests upon mere conjecture.

Forgive me pray good people all  
 For deviating so  
 In spirit sure I had a call—  
 And now I on will go.

Has any here a daughter fair  
 Too fond of reading novels  
 Too apt to fall in love with care  
 And charming Mister Lovels<sup>1</sup>

O put a gadfly to that thing  
 She keeps so white and pert  
 I mean the finger for the ring  
 And it will breed a Wort—

Has any here a pious spouse  
 Who seven times a day  
 Scolds as King David pray'd<sup>2</sup>; to chouse  
 And have her holy way—

O let a Gadfly's little sting  
 Persuade her sacred tongue  
 That noises are a common thing  
 But that her bell has rung

And as this is the summum bo  
 Num of all conquering  
 I leave withouten wordes mo<sup>3</sup>  
 The Gadfly's little sting

Last Evening we came round the End of Loch Fine to Inverary—the Duke of Argyle's Castle is very modern magnificent and more so from the place it is in—the woods seem old enough to remember t(w)o or three changes in the Craggs about them—the Lake was beautiful and there was a Band at a distance by the Castle. I must say I enjoyed t(w)o or three common tunes—but nothing could stifle the horrors of a solo on the Bag-pipe—I thought the Beast would never have done—Yet was I doomed to hear another—On ente(r)ing Inverary we saw a Play Bill—Brown was knock'd up from new shoes—so I went to the

<sup>1</sup> The hero of Scott's novel 'The Antiquary'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Psalm cxix. 164.

<sup>3</sup> Keats had been reading Chaucer.





good bottle of Port but all together the fare is too coarse—I feel it a little—another week will break us in—I forgot to tell you that when we came through Glencroe it was early in the morning and we were pleased with the noise of Shepherds Sheep and dogs in the misty heights close above us—we saw none of them for some time, till two came in sight creeping among the Craggs like Emmets, yet their voices came quite plainly to us—The Approach to Loch Awe was very solemn towards nightfall—the first glance was a streak of water deep in the Bases of large black Mountains—We had come along a complete mountain road, where if one listened there was not a sound but that of Mountain Streams. We walked 20 Miles by the side of Loch Awe—every ten steps creating a new and beautiful picture—sometimes through little wood—there are two islands on the Lake each with a beautiful ruin—one of them rich in ivy—We are detained this morning by the rain. I will tell you exactly where we are. We are between Loch Craginish and the Sea just opposite Long Island.<sup>1</sup> Yesterday our walk was of this description—the near Hills were not very lofty but many of their steeps beautifully wooded—the distant Mountains in the Hebrides very grand the Saltwater Lakes coming up between Craggs and Islands fulltided and scarcely ruffled—sometimes appearing as one large Lake, sometimes as th(r)ee distinct ones in different directions—At one point we saw afar off a rocky opening into the main Sea—We have also seen an Eagle or two. They move about without the least motion of Wings when in an indolent fit—I am for the first time in a country where a foreign Language is spoken—they gabble away Gælic at a vast rate—numbers of them speak English—There are not many Kilts in Argylshire—At Fort William they say a Man is not admitted into Society without one—the Ladies there have a horror at the indecency of Breeches. I cannot give you a better idea of Highland Life than by describing the place we are in—The Inn or public is by far the best house in the immediate neighbourhood—It has a white front with tolerable windows—the table I am writing on su(r)prises me as being a nice flapped Mehogany one; at the same time the

<sup>1</sup> Colvin identifies the place as Kilmelfort ('Letters of John Keats to his Family and Friends,' 1891, page 140), with the island of Luing in sight, to the east of Scarba Sound.

place has no watercloset nor any thing like it. You may if you peep see through the floor chinks into the ground rooms. The old Grandmother of the house seems intelligent though not over clean. N.B. No snuff being to be had in the village she made us some. The Guid Man is a rough looking hardy stout Man who I think does not speak so much English as the Guid wife who is very obliging and sensible and moreover though stockingless, has a pair of old Shoes—Last night some Whisky Men sat up clattering Gælic till I am sure one o’Clock to our great annoyance—There is a Gælic testament on the Drawers in the next room—White and blue China ware has crept all about here—Yesterday there passed a Donkey laden with tins—opposite the Window there are hills in a Mist—a few Ash trees and a mountain stream at a little distance—They possess a few head of Cattle—If you had gone round to the back of the House just now—you would have seen more hills in a Mist—some dozen wretched black Cottages scented of peat smoke which finds i(t)s way by the door or a hole in the roof—a girl here and there barefoot There was one little thing driving Cows down a slope like a mad thing—there was another standing at the cowhouse door rather pretty fac’d all up to the ankles in dirt.<sup>1</sup> We have walk’d 15 Miles in a soaking rain to Oban opposite the Isle of Mull which is so near Staffa we had though(t) to pass to it—but the expense is 7 Guineas and those rather extorted—Staffa you see is a fashionable place and therefore every one concerned with it either in this town or the Island are what you call up. ’Tis like paying sixpence for an apple at the playhouse—this irritated me and Brown was not best pleased—we have therefore resolved to set northward for fort William tomorrow morning—I feel (<for fell>) upon a bit of white Bread to day like a Sparrow—it was very fine—I cannot manage the cursed Oatcake—Remember me to all and let me hear a good account of you at Inverness—I am sorry Georgy had not those Lines. Good bye.

Your affectionate Brother

John——

<sup>1</sup> The next sentence was probably written on July 21.

79. To BENJAMIN BAILEY. *Saturday 18–Wednesday 22 July 1818.*

Address: Mr B. Bailey | T. Bailey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Thorney Abbey | Peterborough.<sup>1</sup>

*Imperfect postmark: GLASGOW 31 JULY.*

Inverary July 18<sup>th</sup>.

My dear Bailey,

The only day I have had a chance of seeing you when you were last in London I took every advantage of—some devil led you out of the way. Now I have written to Reynolds to tell me where you will be in Cumberland<sup>2</sup>—so that I cannot miss you—and when I see you the first thing I shall do will be to read that about Milton and Ceres and Proserpine<sup>3</sup>—for though I am not going after you to John o' Grotts it will be but poetical to say so. And here Bailey I will say a few words written in a sane and sober Mind, a very scarce thing with me, for they may hereafter save you a great deal of trouble about me, which you do not deserve, and for which I ought to be bastinadoed. I carry all matters to an extreme—so that when I have any little vexation it grows in five Minutes into a theme for Sophocles—then and in that temper if I write to any friend I have so little selfpossession that I give him matter for grieving at the very time perhaps when I am laughing at a Pun. Your last Letter made me blush for the pain I had given you. I know my own disposition so well that I am certain of writing many times hereafter in the same strain to you—now you know how far to believe in them—you must allow for imagination. I know I shall not be able to help it. I am sorry you are grieved at my not continuing my visits to little Britain<sup>4</sup>—yet I think I have as far as a Man can do who has Books to read to (<for and> subjects to think upon—for that reason I have

<sup>1</sup> Redirected by another hand to Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. B. Bailey, *Mr. Fairbairn's, Court Square, Carlisle.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 76, p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> Not that faire field  
Of Enna, where *Proserpin* gathering flours,  
Her self a fairer Floure by gloomie *Dis*  
Was gatherd, which cost *Ceres* all that pain  
To seek her through the world—'Paradise Lost', IV, ll. 268–72.

<sup>4</sup> It was in Little Britain that the Reynolds family lived, Mr. Reynolds, the father of Keats's friend, being thus close to his work as Writing Master at the neighbouring school, Christ's Hospital. Dilke notes that Bailey was at this time in love with Mariane Reynolds, afterwards Mrs. Green. 'She was,' he says, 'a very beautiful girl—somewhat cold and saturnine, and

been no where else except to Wentworth place so nigh at hand—moreover I have been too often in a state of health that made me think it prudent no(t) to hazard the night Air. Yet further I will confess to you that I cannot enjoy Society small or numerous. I am certain that our fair friends are glad I should come for the mere sake of my coming; but I am certain I bring with me a Vexation they are better without—If I can possibly at any time feel my temper coming upon me I refrain even from a promised visit. I am certain I have not a right feeling towards Women—at this moment I am striving to be just to them but I cannot—Is it because they fall so far beneath my Boyish imagination? When I was a Schoolboy I though(t) a fair Woman a pure Goddess, my mind was a soft nest in which some one of them slept, though she knew it not—I have no right to expect more than their reality. I thought them ethereal above Men—I find them perhaps equal—great by comparison is very small. Insult may be inflicted in more ways than by Word or action—one who is tender of being insulted does not like to think an insult against another—I do not like to think insults in a Lady's Company—I commit a Crime with her which absence would have not known. Is it not extraordinary? When among Men I have no evil thoughts, no malice, no spleen—I feel free to speak or to be silent—I can listen and from every one I can learn—my hands are in my pockets I am free from all suspicion and comfortable. When I am among Women I have evil thoughts, malice spleen—I cannot speak or be silent—I am full of Suspicions and therefore listen to nothing—I am in a hurry to be gone—You must be charitable and put all this perversity to my being disappointed since Boyhood. Yet with such feelings I am happier alone among Crowds of men, by myself or with a friend or two—With all this trust me Bailey I have not the least idea that Men of different feelings and inclinations are more short-sighted than myself—I never rejoiced more than at my Brother's Marriage and shall do so at that of any of my friends—. I must absolutely get over this—but how? The only way is to find the root of evil, and so though always admired not generally liked. She was afterwards hardly tried by misfortune, and never yielded—indeed I never thought so highly of her until she had undergone those trials, which I think were beyond the strength of any other in the family. She was never abased by them—never complained.'

cure it "with backward mutters of dissevering Power"<sup>1</sup>—that is a difficult thing; for an obstinate Prejudice can seldom be produced but from a gordian complication of feelings, which must take time to unravell and care to keep unravelled. I could say a good deal about this but I will leave it in hopes of better and more worthy dispositions—and also content that I am wronging no one, for after all I do think better of Womankind than to suppose they care whether Mister John Keats five feet high likes them or not. You appear to wish to avoid any words on this subject—don't think it a bore my dear fellow—it shall be my Amen—I should not have consented to myself these four Months tramping in the highlands but that I thought it would give me more experience, rub off more Prejudice, use (me) to more hardship, identify finer scenes load me with grander Mountains, and strengthen more my reach in Poetry, than would stopping at home among Books even though I should reach Homer. By this time I am comparatively a mountaineer—I have been among wilds and Mountains too much to break out much about the (i)r Grandeur. I have fed upon Oat cake—not long enough to be very much attached to it—The first Mountains I saw, though not so large as some I have since seen, weighed very solemnly upon me. The effect is wearing away—yet I like them mainly—

We have come this evening<sup>2</sup> with a Guide, for without was impossible, into the middle of the Isle of Mull, pursuing our cheap journey to Iona and perhaps Staffa—We would not follow the common and fashionable mode from the great imposition of expense. We have come over heath and rock and river and bog to what in England would be called a horrid place—yet it belongs to a Shepherd pretty well off perhaps. The family speak not a word but gælic and we have not yet seen their faces for the smoke which after visiting every cranny, (not excepting my eyes very much incommoded for writing), finds it(s) way out at the door. I am more comfortable than I could have imagined in such a place, and so is Brown. The People are all very kind. We lost our way a little yesterday and enquiring at a Cottage, a young Woman without a word threw on her cloak and walked a Mile in a missling rain and splashy way to put us right again. I could not have had a greater

<sup>1</sup> 'Comus', l. 817.

<sup>2</sup> The 22nd of July.

pleasure in these parts than your mention of my Sister. She is very much prisoned from me. I am affraid it will be some time before I can take her to many places I wish—I trust we shall see you ere long in Cumberland—at least I hope I shall before my visit to America more than once I intend to pass a whole year with George if I live to the completion of the three next—My sisters well-fare and the hopes of such a stay in America will make me observe your advice—I shall be prudent and more careful of my health than I have been—I hope you will be about paying your first visit to Town after settling when we come into Cumberland—Cumberland however will be no distance to me after my present journey—I shall spin to you (in) a minute—I begin to get rather a contempt for distances. I hope you will have a nice convenient room for a Library. Now you are so well in health do keep it up by never missing your dinner by not reading hard and by taking proper exercise. You'll have a horse I suppose so you must make a point of sweating him. You say I must study Dante—well the only Books I have with me are those three little Volumes.<sup>1</sup> I read that fine passage you mention a few days ago. Your Letter followed me from Hampstead to Port Patrick and thence to Glasgow—you must think me by this time a very pretty fellow. One of the pleasantest bouts we have had was our walk to Burns's Cottage, over the Doon and past Kirk Alloway—I had determined to write a Sonnet in the Cottage. I did but lauk it was so wretched I destroyed it<sup>2</sup>—howev<sup>r</sup> in a few days afterwards I wrote some lines cousin-german to the Circumstance which I

<sup>1</sup> 'The Vision; or, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, of Dante Alighieri. Translated by the Rev. H. F. Cary, A.M. In three volumes. London: Printed for Taylor and Hessey, 93, Fleet Street. 1814.' This pretty little 32mo is the first complete edition of Cary's renowned version of the 'Commedia', though the translation of the 'Inferno' had appeared as far back as 1805.

<sup>2</sup> The sonnet in question is that beginning with the line

This mortal body of a thousand days

That it survived Keats's attempt to annul it is a piece of good fortune for which we are are probably indebted to the watchfulness of that assiduous Boswell, Charles Brown, who was already an eager curator of Keats's utterances in verse. In Letter 76, p. 176, Keats had told Reynolds that the sonnet was so bad he could not transcribe it. In Letter 77, p. 182, he had said to Tom Keats on the 13th of July, 'it is so bad I cannot venture it here'. According to Lord Houghton he had said much the same to Haydon; but see foot-note to Letter 77, p. 182. If between the 13th and the 22nd he had torn up the holograph, it is clear that Brown had had ample opportunity to copy it.—H.B.F.

will transcribe or rather cross scribe in the front of this—Reynolds's illness has made him a new Man—he will be stronger than ever—before I left London he was really getting a fat face. Brown keeps on writing volumes of adventures to Dilke—when we get in of an evening and I have perhaps taken my rest on a couple of Chairs he affronts my indolence and Luxury by pulling out of his Knapsack 1<sup>st</sup> his paper—2<sup>ndly</sup> his pens and last his ink. Now I would not care if he would change about a little. I say now why not Bailey take out his pens first sometimes—But I might as well tell a hen to hold up her head before she drinks instead of afterwards.  
Your affectionate friend

John Keats—

There is a joy in footing slow across a silent plain  
Where Patriot Battle has been fought when Glory had the  
gain;  
There is a pleasure on the heath where Druids old have  
been,  
Where Mantles grey have rustled by and swept the nettles  
green:  
There is a joy in every spot, made known by times of old,  
New to the feet, although the tale a hundred times be  
told:  
There is a deeper joy than all, more solemn in the heart,  
More parching to the tongue than all, of more divine a  
smart,  
When weary feet forget themselves upon a pleasant turf,  
Upon hot sand, or flinty road, or Sea shore iron scurf,  
Toward the Castle or the Cot where long ago was born  
One who was great through mortal days and died of fame  
unshorn.  
Light He(a)ther bells may tremble then, but they are far  
away;  
Woodlark may sing from sandy fern,—the Sun may hear  
his Lay;  
Runnels may kiss the grass on shelves and shallows clear  
But their low voices are not heard though come on travels  
drear;  
Bloodred the sun may set behind black mountain peaks;  
Blue tides may sluice and drench their time in Caves and  
weedy creeks;

Eagles may seem to sleep wing wide upon the Air;  
Ring doves may fly convuls'd across to some high cedar'd  
lair;

But the forgotten eye is still fast wedded<sup>1</sup> to the ground—  
As Palmer's that with weariness mid desert shrine hath  
found.

At such a time the Soul's a Child, in Childhood is the  
brain

Forgotten is the worldly heart—alone, it beats in vain—  
Aye if a Madman could have leave to pass a healthful day,  
To tell his forehead's swoon and faint when first began  
decay,

He might make tremble many a Man whose Spirit had  
gone forth

To find a Bard's low Cradle place about the silent north.  
Scanty the hour and few the steps beyond the Bourn of  
Care,

Beyond the sweet and bitter world—beyond it unaware;  
Scanty the hour and few the steps because a longer stay  
Would bar return and make a Man forget his mortal  
way.

O horrible! to lose the sight of well remember'd face,  
Of Brother's eyes, of Sister's Brow, constant to every place;  
Filling the Air as on we move with Portraiture intense  
More warm than those heroic tints that fill a Painter's  
sense,

When Shapes of old come striding by and visages of old,  
Locks shining black, hair scanty grey and passions mani-  
fold.

No, No that horror cannot be—for at the Cable's length  
Man feels the gentle Anchor pull and gladdens in its  
strength—

One hour half ideot he stands by mossy waterfall,  
But in the very next he reads his Soul's memorial:  
He reads it on the Mountain's height where chance he  
may sit down

Upon rough marble diadem, that Hill's eternal crown.  
Yet be the Anchor e'er so fast, room is there for a prayer  
That Man may never loose his Mind on Mountains bleak  
and bare;

<sup>1</sup> Possibly 'welded': the word has been altered and is confused in the 'crossings' of the letter; but cf. 'Isabella', st. vii, ll. 3-4, in support of 'wedded'.



That he may stray league after League some great Berth-  
place to find  
And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward sight  
unblind—<sup>1</sup>

80. To THOMAS KEATS (*Thursday 23*)—*Sunday 26 July 1818.*

*Address:* Mr Tho<sup>s</sup> Keats | Well Walk | Hampstead | Middx—

*Imperfect postmarks:* 31 JUL 18 and AU 3 18.

Dun an cullen<sup>2</sup>

My dear Tom,

Just after my last had gone to the Post in came one of the Men with whom we endeavoured to agree about going to Staffa—he said what a pitty it was we should turn aside and not see the Curiosities. So we had a little talk and finally agreed that he should be our guide across the Isle of Mull—We set out, crossed two ferries, one to the isle of Kerrara of little distance, the other from Kerrara to Mull 9 Miles across—we did it in forty minutes with a fine Breeze—The road through the Island, or rather the track is the most dreary you can think of—betwe(e)n dreary Mountains—over bog and rock and river with our Breeches tucked up and our Stockings in hand. About eight oClock we arrived at a Shepherd's Hut into which we could scarcely get for the Smoke through a door lower than my Shoulders—We found our way into a little compartment with the rafters and turf thatch blackened with smoke—the earth floor full of Hills and Dales—We had some white Bread with us, made a good Supper and slept in our Clothes in some Blankets, our Guide snored on another little bed about an Arm's length off—This morning we came about sax Miles to Breakfast by rather a better path and we are now in by comparison a Mansion—Our Guide is I think a very obliging fellow—in the way this morning he sang us two Gaelic songs—one made by a M<sup>rs</sup> Brown on her husband's being drowned the other a jacobin one

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1–6, 25–6, and 41–8 of this poem were printed at the close of an article by Charles Brown entitled 'Mountain Scenery' which appeared in 'The New Monthly Magazine', 1822, vol. iv, pp. 247–52. It was printed in full in 'The Examiner', 14 July 1822.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly a mistake of Keats's for Derrynatulen. The letter is endorsed by Tom 'Rcd August 3<sup>rd</sup> Ans<sup>d</sup>. Do Do'

on Charles Stuart. For some days Brown has been enquiring out his Genealogy here—he thinks his Grandfather came from long Island—he got a parcel of people about him at a Cottage door last Evening—chatted with one who had been a Miss Brown and who I think from a likeness must have been a Relation—he jawed with the old Woman—flattered a young one—kissed a child who was affraid of his Spectacles and finally drank a pint of Milk—They handle his Spectacles as we do a sensitive leaf—.

July 26<sup>th</sup> <sup>1</sup> Well—we had a most wretched walk of 37 Miles across the Island of Mull and then we crossed to Iona or Icolmkill from Icolmkill we took a boat at a bargain to take us to Staffa and land us at the head of Loch Nakgal whence we should only have to walk half the distance to Oban again and on a better road—All this is well pass'd and done with this singular piece of Luck that there was an intermission in the bad Weather just as we saw Staffa at which it is impossible to land but in a tolerable Calm Sea—But I will first mention Icolmkill—I know not whether you have heard much about this Island, I never did before I came nigh it. It is rich in the most interesting Antiqu(i)ties. Who would expect to find the ruins of a fine Cathedral Church, of Cloisters, Colleges, Monastaries and Nunneries in so remote an Island? The Beginning of these things was in the sixth Century under the superstition of a would-be Bishop-saint who landed from Ireland and chose the spot from its Beauty—for at that time the now treeless place was covered with magnificent Woods. Columba in the Gaelic is Colm signifying Dove—Kill signifies church and I is as good as Island—so I-colm-kill means the Island of Saint Columba's Church. Now this Saint Columba became the Dominic of the barbarian Christians of the north and was famed also far south—but more especially was revered by the Scots the Picts the Norwegians the Irish. In a course of years perhaps the I(s)land was considered the most holy ground of the north, and the old Kings of the afore mentioned nations chose it for their burial place. We were shown a spot in the Church-yard where they say 61 Kings are buried 48 Scotch from

<sup>1</sup> Keats is now writing at Oban. This account of Iona and Staffa, in terms almost but not quite identical with these, was copied into the Winchester letter of September 1819, No. 156, pp. 409-413. For 'Nakgal' he should have written 'na Keal'.

Fergus 2<sup>nd</sup> to Mackbeth 8 Irish 4 Norwegian and 1 french—they lie in rows compact—Then we were shown other matters of later date but still very ancient—many tombs of Highland Chieftains—their effigies in complete armour face upwards—black and moss covered—Abbots and Bishops of the island always of one of the chief Clans. There were plenty Macleans and Macdonnells, among these latter the famous Macdonel Lord of the Isles—There have been 300 Crosses in the Island but the Presbyterians destroyed all but two, one of which is a very fine one and completely covered with a shaggy coarse Moss. The old Schoolmaster<sup>1</sup> an ignorant little man but reckoned very clever, showed us these things—He is a Macklean and as much above 4 foot as he is under 4 foot 3 inches—he stops at one glass of whiskey unless you press another and at the second unless you press a third. I am puzzled how to give you an Idea of Staffa. It can only be represented by a first rate drawing—One may compare the surface of the Island to a roof—this roof is supported by grand pillars of basalt standing together as thick as honeycombs. The finest thing is Fingal's Cave—it is entirely a hollowing out of Basalt Pillars. Suppose now the Giants who rebelled against Jove had taken a whole Mass of black Columns and bound them together like bunches of matches—and then with immense Axes had made a cavern in the body of these columns—of course the roof and floor must be composed of the broken ends of the Columns—such is Fingal's Cave except that the Sea has done the work of excavations and is continually dashing there—so that we walk along the sides of the cave on the pillars which are left as if for convenient Stairs—the roof is arched somewhat gothic wise and the length of some of the entire side pillars is 50 feet—About the island you might seat an army of Men each on a pillar. The length of the Cave is 120 feet and from its extremity the view into the sea through the large Arch at the entrance<sup>2</sup>—the colour of the column(s) is a sort of black with a lurking gloom of purple ther(e)in—For solemnity and grandeur

<sup>1</sup> Allan Maclean was schoolmaster there in 1790 and was still there in 1833, 'fresh and fair' and 'verging upon 80', when L. Maclean wrote his 'Historical Account of Iona, from the earliest period' (Edinburgh, 1833).

<sup>2</sup> In Letter 156, p. 411, the words 'is very grand' complete this sentence.

it far surpasses the finest Cathedrall<sup>1</sup>—At the extremity of the Cave there is a small perforation into another cave, at which the waters meeting and buffetting each other there is sometimes produced a report as of a cannon heard as far as Iona which must be 12 Miles—As we approached in the boat there was such a fine swell of the sea that the<sup>2</sup> pillars appeared rising immediately out of the crystal—But it is impossible to describe it.

Not Aladin magian  
 Ever such a work began.  
 Not the Wizard of the Dee  
 Ever such <a> dream could see  
 Not St John in Patmos isle  
 In the passion of his toil  
 When he saw the churches seven  
 Golden-aisled built up in heaven  
 Gazed at such a rugged wonder.  
 As I stood its roofing<sup>3</sup> under  
 Lo! I saw one sleeping there  
 On the marble cold and bare  
 While the surges washed his feet  
 And his garments white did beat  
 Drench'd about the sombre rocks,  
 On his neck his well-grown locks  
 Lifted dry above the Main  
 Were upon the curl again—  
 What is this and what art thou?  
 Whisper'd I and touch'd his brow.

<sup>1</sup> Brown writing to Henry Snook says:—'We hired a boat at Iona to take us to Staffa,—that astonishing island of Basaltic Pillars, which you know I so much desired to look at. We went into the cave, nearly to the end, and I shall never forget the solemn impression it made on me;—the pillars on each side, the waves beneath, and the beautiful roof,—all surpassed the work of man,—it seemed like a Cathedral, built by the Almighty to raise the minds of his creatures to the purest and the grandest devotion,—no one could have an evil thought in such a place. We returned to Oban by a different road, and I ought to tell you of the strange sight we had of a swarm of sea gulls attacking a shoal of herrings, with now and then a porpoise heaving about among them for a supper,—I assure you that as our boat passed the spot, the water was literally spangled with herring scales, so great had been the destruction by these Gulls.'

Brown copied and sent to Severn Keats's beautiful poem on Fingal's Cave—'This Cathedral of the Sea'.

<sup>2</sup> Keats wrote 'the the'.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'Hyperion', II. 14.

What art thou and what is this?  
 Whisper'd I and strove to Kiss  
 The Spirit's hand to wake ~~him-up~~ his eyes.  
 Up he started in a thrice.  
 I am Lycidas said he  
 Fam'd in funeral Minstrelsey.  
 This was architected thus  
 By the great Oceanus  
 Here his mighty waters play  
 Hollow Organs all the day  
 Here by turns his dolphins all  
 Finny palmers great and small  
 Come to pay devotion due—  
 Each a mouth of pea(r)ls must strew  
~~Many a Mortal comes to see~~  
~~This Cathedral of the S-~~  
 Many a Mortal of these days  
 Dares to pass our sacred ways  
 Dares to touch audaciously  
 This Cathedral of the Sea—  
 I have been the Pontif priest  
 Where the Waters never rest  
 Where a fledgy sea bird choir  
 Soars for ever—holy fire  
 I have hid from Mortal Man.  
~~Old~~ Proteus is my Sacristan.  
 But the stupid eye of Mortal  
 Hath pass'd beyond the Rocky portal  
 So for ever will I leave  
 Such a taint and soon unweave  
 All the magic of the place—  
 'Tis now free to stupid face  
 To cutters and to fashion boats  
 To cravats and to Petticoats.  
 The great Sea shall war it down  
 For its fame shall not be blown  
 At every farthing quadrille dance.  
 So saying with a Spirits glance  
 He dived—<sup>1</sup>

I am sorry I am so indolent as to write such stuff as this—

<sup>1</sup> Lines 7–8 and the last thirteen were omitted by Keats in the copy he made in Letter 156 (September 1819).

it cant be help'd.—The western coast of Scotland is a most strange place—it is composed of rocks Mountains, mountainous and rocky Islands intersected by Lochs—you can go but a small distance any where from salt water in the highlands

I have a slight sore throat and think it best to stay a day or two at Oban. Then we shall proceed to Fort William and Inverness—Where I am anxious to be on account of a Letter from you.—Brown in his Letters puts down every little circumstance. I should like to do the same but I confess myself too indolent and besides next winter every thing will come up in prime order as we verge on such and such things.

Have you heard in any way of George? I should think by this time he must have landed—I in my carelessness never thought of knowing where a letter would find him on the other side—I think Baltimore but I am affraid of directing to the wrong place. I shall begin some chequer work for him directly and it will be ripe for the post by the time I hear from you next after this—I assure you I often long for a seat and a Cup o' tea at well Walk—especially now that mountains, castles and Lakes are becoming common to me—yet I would rather summer it out for on the whole I am happier than when I have time to be glum—perhaps it may cure me—Immediately on my return I shall begin studying hard with a peep at the theatre now and then—and depend upon it I shall be very luxurious—With respect to Women I think I shall be able to conquer my passions hereafter better than I have yet done. You will help me to talk of george next winter and we will go now and then to see Fanny—Let me hear a good account of your health and comfort telling me truly how you do alone—

Remember me to all including Mr and Mrs Bentley—<sup>1</sup>

Your most affectionate Brother

John—

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Bentley, the Postman's wife who looked after the Keatses, is described by Dilke as 'a well-behaved kind and motherly person'. It was doubtless this fact and the proximity of friends that made it possible for Keats to leave his young brother alone at the lodgings and start on the Scotch tour.

81. To THOMAS KEATS. *Monday 3 August 1818.*

*Address:* Mr Tho<sup>s</sup> Keats | Well Walk | Hampstead | Middx—

*Postmarks:* INVERNESS 6 AUG 1818; TOO LATE; AUG 9 1818 and 10 O'CLOCK AU 12 1818.

Letter Findlay, August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Ah mio Ben.

My dear Tom,

We have made but poor progress Lately, chiefly from bad weather for my throat is in a fair way of getting quite well, so I have had nothing of consequence to tell you till yesterday when we went up Ben Nevis, the highest Mountain in Great Britain—On that account I will never ascend another in this empire—Skiddaw is nothing to it either in height or in difficulty. It is above 4300 feet from the Sea level and Fortwilliam stands at the head of a Salt water Lake, consequently we took it completely from that level. I am heartily glad it is done—it is almost like a fly crawling up a wainscoat—Imagine the task of mounting 10 Saint Pauls without the convenience of Stair cases. We set out about five in the morning with a Guide in the Tartan and Cap and soon arrived at the foot of the first ascent which we immediately began upon—after much fag and tug and a rest and a glass of whiskey apiece we gained the top of the first rise and saw then a tremendous chap above us which the guide said was still far from the top—After the first Rise our way lay along a heath valley in which there was a Loch—after about a Mile in this Valley we began upon the next ascent—more formidable by far than the last and kept mounting with short intervals of rest untill we got above all vegetation, among nothing but loose Stones which lasted us to the very top—the Guide said we had three Miles of a stony ascent—we gained the first tolerable level after the valley to the height of what in the Valley we had thought the top and saw still above us another huge crag which still the Guide said was not the top—to that we made with an obstinate fag, and having

81. If Keats's date is right, the interval between the beginning of this letter and its consignment to the Post Office was three days; in the meantime the sore throat appears to have held its own even by Keats's own admission at the close; and a day later Brown wrote very seriously of it, both to Mr. Dilke of Chichester and to Henry Snook. Letterfinlay is about twelve miles (as the crow flies) from Ben Nevis, in the direct line for Inverness, and is close to the banks of Loch Lochy.—H.B.F.

gained it there came on a Mist, so that from that part to the very top we walked in a Mist. The whole immense head of the Mountain is composed of large loose stones—thousands of acres—Before we had got half way up we passed large patches of snow and near the top there is a chasm some hundred feet deep completely glutted with it—Talking of chasms they are the finest wonder of the whole—the(y) appear great rents in the very heart of the mountain though they are not, being at the side of it, but other huge crags arising round it give the appearance to Nevis of a shattered heart or Core in itself—These Chasms are 1500 feet in depth and are the most tremendous places I have ever seen—they turn one giddy if you choose to give way to it—We tumbled in large stones and set the echoes at work in fine style. Sometimes these chasms are tolerably clear, sometimes there is a misty cloud which seems to steam up and sometimes they are entirely smothered with clouds.

After a little time the Mist cleared away but still there were large Clouds about attracted by old Ben to a certain distance so as to form as it appear'd large dome curtains which kept sailing about, opening and shutting at intervals here and there and everywhere; so that although we did not see one vast wide extent of prospect all round we saw something perhaps finer—these cloud-veils opening with a dissolving motion and showing us the mountainous region beneath as through a loop hole—these cloudy loop holes ever varying and discovering fresh prospect east, west north and South. Then it was misty again and again it was fair—then puff came a cold breeze of wind and bared a craggy chap we had not yet seen though in close neighbourhood—Every now and then we had over head blue Sky clear and the sun pretty warm. I do not know whether I can give you an Idea of the prospect from a large Mountain top—You are on a stony plain which of course makes you forget you are on any but low ground—the horison or rather edges of this plain being above 4000 feet above the Sea hide all the Country immediately beneath you; so that the next objects you see all round next to the edges of the flat top are the Summits of Mountains of some distance off—as you move about on all side(s) you see more or less of the near neighbour country according as the Mountain you stand upon is in



different parts steep or rounded—but the most new thing of all is the sudden leap of the eye from the extremity of what appears a plain into so vast a distance. On one part of the top there is a handsome pile of stones done pointedly by some soldiers of artillery, I clim(b)ed onto them and so got a little higher than old Ben himself. It was not so cold as I expected—yet cold enough for a glass of Wiskey now and then—There is not a more fickle thing than the top of a Mountain—what would a Lady give to change her head-dress as often and with as little trouble!—There are a good many red deer upon Ben Nevis we did not see one—the dog we had with us keep (<for kept>) a very sharp look out and really languished for a bit of a worry—I have said nothing yet of out (<for our>) getting on among the loose stones large and small sometimes on two sometimes on three, sometimes four legs—sometimes two and stick, sometimes three and stick, then four again, then two, then a jump, so that we kept on ringing changes on foot, hand, stick, jump, boggle, s(t)umble, foot, hand, foot, (very gingerly) stick again, and then again a game at all fours. After all there was one M<sup>rs</sup> Cameron of 50 years of age and the fattest woman in all inverness shire who got up this Mountain some few years ago—true she had her servants—but then she had her self—She ought to have hired Syphilus—“Up the high hill he heaves a huge round<sup>1</sup>—M<sup>rs</sup> Cameron” ’Tis said a little conversation took place between the mountain and the Lady—After taking a glass of Wiskey as she was tolerably seated at ease she thus began

M<sup>rs</sup> C.

Upon my Life Sir Nevis I am pique’d  
That I have so far panted tugg’d and reek’d  
To do an honor to your old bald pate  
And now am sitting on you just to bate,  
Without your paying me<sup>2</sup> one compliment.  
Alas ’tis so with all, when our intent  
Is plain, and in the eye of all Mankind  
We fair ones show a preference, too blind!  
You Gentleman immediat(e)ly turn tail.  
O let me then my hapless fate bewail!  
Ungrateful Baldpate have I not disdain’d  
The pleasant Valleys—have I not mad braind

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Pope’s Homer’s ‘Odyssey’, xi. 736.

<sup>2</sup> Keats wrote ‘one one’.

Deserted all my Pickles and preserves  
 My China closet too—with wretched Nerves  
 To boot—say wretched ingrate have I not  
 Le(f)t my soft cushion chair and caudle pot.  
 'Tis true I had no corns—no! thank the fates  
 My Shoemaker was always M<sup>r</sup> Bates.  
 And if not M<sup>r</sup> Bates why I'm not old!  
 Still dumb ungrateful Nevis—still so cold!

Here the Lady took some more whiskey and was putting  
 even more to her lips when she dashed (it) to the Ground  
 for the Mountain began to grumble—which continued for  
 a few Minutes before he thus began,

Ben Nevis

What whining bit of tongue and Mouth thus dares  
 Distur(b)'d my Slumber of a thousand years—<sup>1</sup>  
 Even so long my sleep has been secure—  
 And to be so awaked I'll not endure.  
 Oh pain—for since the Eagle's earliest scream<sup>1</sup>  
 I've had a dam'd confounded ugly dream

you?  
 A Nightmare sure. What Madam was it ~~true~~  
 It cannot be! My old eyes are not true!  
 Red-Crag,\* My Spectacles! Now let me see!  
 Good Heavens Lady how the gemini  
 Did you get here? O I shall split my Sides!  
 I shall earthquake——

M<sup>rs</sup> C—

Sweet Nevis do not quake, for though I love  
 You(r) honest Countenance all things above  
 Truly I should not like to be convey'd  
 So far into your Bosom—gentle Maid  
 Loves not too rough a treatment gentle sir—  
 Pray thee be calm and do not quake nor stir  
 No not a Stone or I shall go in fits—

Ben Nevis

I must—I shall—I meet not such tit bits—  
 I meet not such sweet creatures every day

\* a domestic of Ben's.

<sup>1</sup> Even in these nonsense verses Keats has the feeling of his sonnet to Ailsa Rock.

By my old night cap night cap night and day  
 I must have one sweet Buss—I must and shall!  
 Red Crag!—What Madam can you then repent  
 Of all the toil and vigour you have spent  
 To see Ben Nevis and to touch his nose?  
 Red Crag I say! O I must have you close!  
 Red Crag, there lies beneath my farthest toe  
 A vein of Sulphur—go dear Red Crag go—  
 And rub your flinty back against it—budge!  
 Dear Madam I must kiss you, faith I must!  
 I must Embrace you with my dearest gust!  
 Block-head,\* d'ye hear—Block-head I'll make her feel  
 There lies beneath my east leg's northern heel  
 A cave of young earth dragons—well my boy  
 Go thither quick and so complete my joy  
 Take you a bundle of the largest pines  
 And where the sun on fiercest Phosphor shines<sup>1</sup>  
 Fire them and ram them in the Dragons' nest  
 Then will the dragons fry and fizz their best  
 Until ten thousand now no bigger than  
 Poor Aligators poor things of one span  
 Will each one swell to twice ten times the size  
 Of northern whale—then for the tender prize—  
 The moment then—for then will red Crag rub  
 His flinty back and I shall Kiss and snub  
 And press my dainty morsel to my breast  
 Blockhead make haste!

O Muses weep the rest—  
 The Lady fainted and he thought her dead  
 So pulled the clouds again about his head<sup>2</sup>  
 And went to sleep again—soon she was rous'd  
 By her affrigh(t)ed Servants—next day hous'd  
 Safe on the lowly ground she bless'd her fate  
 That fainting fit was not delayed too late

But what surprises me above all is how this Lady got down again. I felt it horribly. 'Twas the most vile descent—shook me all to pieces—Over leaf you will find a Sonnet I wrote on the top of Ben Nevis. We have just entered  
 \* another domestic of Ben's.

<sup>1</sup> Below this line Keats wrote 'turn to the beginning', indicating the continuation on the first page; he finished the letter in 'crossings' on the first and second pages.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sonnet 'To Ailsa Rock', ll. 8, 9.

Inverness. I have three Letters from you and one (from) Fanny—and one from Dilke. I would set about crossing this all over for you but I will first write to Fanny and Mr<sup>s</sup> Wilie. Then I will begin another to you and not before because I think it better you should have this as soon as possible—My Sore throat is not quite well and I intend stopping here a few days

Read me a Lesson muse, and speak it loud  
 Upon the top of Nevis blind in Mist!  
 I look into the Chasms and a Shroud  
 Vapours doth hide them; just so much I wist  
 Mankind do know of Hell: I look o'erhead  
 And there is sullen Mist; even so much  
 Mankind can tell of Heaven: Mist is spread  
 Before the Earth beneath me—even such  
 Even so vague is Man's sight of himself.  
 Here are the craggy Stones beneath my feet;  
 Thus much I know, that a poor witless elf  
 I tread on them; that all my eye doth meet  
 Is mist and Crag—not only on this height  
 But in the world of thought and mental might—

Good bye till tomorrow

Your most affectionate Brother  
 John—

82. To Mr<sup>s</sup>. WYLIE. Thursday 6 August 1818.

Address: Mr<sup>s</sup> Wylie | Henrietta Street | London

Postmark: not recorded.

Inverness, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1818

My dear Madam—

It was a great regret to me that I should leave all my friends, just at the moment when I might have helped to soften away the time for them. I wanted not to leave my Brother Tom, but more especially, believe me, I should like to have remained near you, were it but for an atom of consolation, after parting with so dear a daughter; My brother George has ever been more than a brother to me, he has been my greatest friend, and I can never forget the sacrifice you have made for his happiness. As I walk along the Mountains here, I am full of these things, and lay in wait, as it were, for the pleasure of seeing you, immediately on my return to town. I wish above all things, to say a

word of Comfort to you, but I know not how. It is impossible to prove that black is white, It is impossible to make out, that Sorrow is joy or joy is Sorrow—

Tom tells me that you called on Mr Haslam with a Newspaper giving an account of a Gentleman in a Fur cap, falling over a precipice in Kirk(c)udbrightshire. If it was me, I did it in a dream, or in some magic interval between the first and second cup of tea; which is nothing extraordinary, when we hear that Mahomet, in getting out of Bed, upset a jug of water, and whilst it was falling, took a fortnight's trip as it seemed to Heaven; yet was back in time to save one drop of water being spilt. As for Fur caps I do not remember one beside my own, except at Carlisle—this was a very good Fur cap, I met in the High Street, and I daresay was the unfortunate one. I daresay that the fates seeing but two Fur caps in the North, thought it too extraordinary, and so threw the Dies which of them should be drowned: The lot fell upon Jonas. I daresay his name was Jonas. All I hope is, that the gaunt Ladies said not a word about hanging, if they did, I shall one day regret that I was not half drowned in Kirk(c)udbright. Stop! let me see!—being half drowned by falling from a precipice is a very romantic affair—Why should I not take it to myself? Keep my secret & I will. How glorious to be introduced in a drawing room to a Lady who reads Novels, with—“Mr So & so—Miss So & so; Miss So & so, this is Mr So & so who fell off a precipice, and was half drowned.(>>) Now I refer it to you whether I should loose so fine an opportunity of making my fortune—No romance lady could resist me—None—Being run under a Waggon; side lamed at a playhouse; Apoplectic, through Brandy; and a thousand other tolerably decent things for badness would be nothing; but being tumbled over a precipice into the sea—Oh it would make my fortune—especially if you could contrive<sup>1</sup> to hint, from this bulletin's authority, that I was not upset on my own account, but that I dashed into the waves after Jessie of Dumblane<sup>2</sup>—and pulled her out by the hair. But that, Alas! she was dead or she would have made me happy

<sup>1</sup> In Jeffrey's transcript and in Lord Houghton's editions the word here is 'continue'; but 'contrive' is clearly right.

<sup>2</sup> 'Jessie, the Flower o' Dunblane', a poem by Robert Tannahill (1774-1810).

with her hand—however in this you may use your own discretion—But I must leave joking and seriously aver, that I have been *werry* romantic indeed, among these Mountains and Lakes. I have got wet through day after day, eaten oat cake, and drank Whiskey, walked up to my knees in Bog, got a sore throat, gone to see Icolmkill and Staffa, met with wholesome food, just here and there as it happened; went up Ben Nevis, and N.B. came down again. Sometimes when I am rather tired, I lean rather languishingly on a Rock, and long for some famous Beauty to get down from her Palfrey in passing; approach me with—her saddle bags and give me—a dozen or two Capital roast beef Sandwiches—

When I come into a large town, you know there is no putting one's Knapsack into one's fob; so the people stare. We have been taken for Spectacle venders, Razor sellers, Jewellers, travelling linnen drapers, Spies, Excisemen, and many things else, I have no idea of. When I asked for letters at the Post Office, Port Patrick; the man asked what Regiment? I have had a peep also at Little Ireland. Tell Henry I have not camped quite on the bare Earth yet; but nearly as bad, in walking through Mull—for the Shepherds huts you can scarcely breathe in, for the Smoke which they seem to endeavour to preserve for smoking on a large scale. Besides riding about 400, we have walked above 600 Miles, and may therefore reckon ourselves as set out.

I wish my dear Madam, that one of the greatest pleasures I shall have on my return, will be seeing you and that I shall ever be

Yours with the greatest Respect and sincerity

John Keats—

From CHARLES BROWN to CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE, SENIOR. *Friday 7 August 1818.*

Inverness. 7<sup>th</sup> August 1818.

My dear Sir,

What shall I write about? I am resolved to send you a letter, but where is the subject? I have already stumped away on my ten toes 642 miles, and seen many fine sights, but I am puzzled to know what to make choice of. Suppose I begin with myself,—there must be a pleasure in that,—and, by way of variety, I must bring in M<sup>r</sup> Keats. Then, be it known, in the first place, we are in as continued a bustle as an old Dowager at Home. Always moving—moving from one place to another, like Dante's inhabitants of the Sulphur Kingdom in search

of cold ground,—prosing over the Map,—calculating distances,—packing up knapsacks,—and paying bills. There's so much for yourself, my dear. "Thank ye, Sir." How many miles to the next Town? "Seventeen lucky miles, Sir." That must be at least twenty; come along, Keats; here's your stick; why, we forgot the map!—now for it; seventeen lucky miles! I must have another hole taken up in the strap of my Knapsack. Oh, the misery of coming to the meeting of three roads without a finger post! There's an old woman coming,—God bless her! she'll tell us all about it. Eh! she can't speak English! Repeat the name of the town over in all ways, but the true spelling way, and possibly she may understand. No, we have not got the brogue. Then toss up heads or tails—for right and left, and fortune send us the right road! Here's a soaking shower coming! ecod! it rolls between the mountains as if it would drown us. At last we come wet and weary to the long wished for Inn. What have you for Dinner? "Truly nothing." No Eggs? "We have two." Any loaf bread? "No, Sir, but we've nice oat-cakes." Any bacon? any dried fish? "No, no, no, Sir!" But you've plenty of Whiskey? "O yes, Sir, plenty of Whiskey!" This is melancholy. Why should so beautiful a Country be poor? Why can't craggy mountains, and granite rocks, bear corn, wine, and oil? These are our misfortunes,—these are what make me "an Eagle's talon in the waist".<sup>1</sup> But I am well repaid for my sufferings. We came out to endure, and to be gratified with scenery, and lo! we have not been disappointed either way. As for the Oat-cakes, I was once in despair about them. I was not only too dainty, but they absolutely made me sick. With a little gulping, I can manage them now. Mr Keats however is too unwell for fatigue and privation. I am waiting here to see him off in the Smack for London. He caught a violent cold in the Island of Mull, which, far from leaving him, has become worse, and the Physician here thinks him too thin and fevered to proceed on our journey. It is a cruel disappointment. We have been as happy as possible together. Alas! I shall have to travel thro' Perthshire and all the Counties round in solitude! But my disappointment is nothing to his; he not only loses my company, (and that's a great loss,) but he loses the Country. Poor Charles Brown will have to trudge by himself,—an odd fellow, and moreover an odd figure;—imagine me with a thick stick in my hand, the knapsack on my back, "with spectacles on nose", a white hat, a tartan coat and trowsers, and a Highland plaid thrown over my shoulders! Don't laugh at me, there's a good fellow,—altho' Mr Keats calls me the Red Cross Knight, and declares my own shadow is ready to split its sides as it follows me. This dress is the best possible dress, as Dr. Pangloss would say. It is light and not easily penetrated by the wet, and when it is, it is not cold,—it has little more than a kind of heavy smoky sensation about it. I must not think of the wind, and the sun, and the rain, after my journey thro' the island of Mull. There's a wild place! Thirty seven miles of jumping and flinging over great stones along no path at all, up the steep and down the steep, and wading thro' rivulets up to the knees, and crossing a bog, a mile long, up to the ancles. I should like to give you a whole and particular account of the many—many wonderful places I have visited,—but why should I ask a man to pay vigentiple postage?

<sup>1</sup> '1 Henry IV', II. iv. 368.

In one word then,—that is to the end of the letter,—let me tell you I have seen one half of the Lakes in Westmoreland & Cumberland,—I have travelled over the whole of the coast of Kirkcudbrightshire, and skudded over to Donaghadee. But I did not like Ireland,—at least that part,—and would go no farther than Belfast. So back came I in a whirligig,—that is in a hurry,—and trotted up to Ayr; where I had the happiness of drinking Whiskey in the very house that Robin Burns was born (in),—and I saw the banks of bonny Doon,—and the brigs of Ayr,—and Kirk Alloway,—I saw it all! After this we went to Glasgow, & then to Loch Lomond,—but you can read all about that place in one of the fashionable guide-books. Then to Loch Awe and down to the foot of it,—oh, what a glen we went thro' to get at it! At the top of the glen my Itinerary mentioned a place called "Rest and be thankful" nine miles off; now we had set out without breakfast, intending to take our meal there, when, horror and starvation! "Rest and be thankful" was not an Inn, but a stone seat!<sup>1</sup>

83. To FANNY KEATS. Tuesday 18 August 1818.

Address: Miss Keats | Miss Tucker's | Walthamstow.

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 19 AU 1818.

Hampstead August 18<sup>th</sup>.

My dear Fanny,

I am affraid you will (think) me very negligent in not having answered your Letter—I see it is dated June 12—I did not arrive at Inverness till the 8<sup>th</sup> of this Month so I am very much concerned at your being disappointed so long a time. I did not intend to have returned to London so soon but have a bad sore throat from a cold I caught in the island of Mull: therefore I thought it best to get home as soon as possible and went on board the Smack from Cromarty. We had a nine days passage and were landed at London Bridge yesterday. I shall have a good deal to

<sup>1</sup> This incomplete letter is printed from the original in the Dilke Collection at Hampstead. In 'Papers of a Critic', i. 5, there are two notes of Mrs. Dilke's connected with the termination of Keats's Scotch tour: under date the 16th of August 1818 she writes—'John Keats' brother is extremely ill, and the doctor begged that his brother might be sent for. Dilke accordingly wrote off to him, which was a very unpleasant task. However, from the journal received from Brown last Friday, he says Keats has been so long ill with his sore throat, that he is obliged to give up. I am rather glad of it, as he will not receive the letter, which might have frightened him very much, as he is extremely fond of his brother. How poor Brown will get on alone I know not, as he loses a cheerful, good-tempered, clever companion.' And again, on the 19th of August, Mrs. Dilke writes—'John Keats arrived here last night, as brown and as shabby as you can imagine; scarcely any shoes left, his jacket all torn at the back, a fur cap, a great plaid, and his knapsack. I cannot tell what he looked like.'

<sup>2</sup> This is a mistake for the 6th—see Letter 82, p. 207, written from Inverness to Mrs. Wylie.



tell you about Scotland—I would begin here but I have a confounded tooth ache. Tom has not been getting better since I left London and for the last fortnight has been worse than ever—he has been getting a little better for these two or three days. I shall ask Mr Abbey to let me bring you to Hampstead. If Mr A should see this Letter tell him that he still must if he pleases forward the Post Bill to Perth as I have empowered my fellow traveller to receive it. I have a few scotch pebbles for you from the Island of Icolmkill—I am affraid they are rather shabby—I did not go near the Mountain of Cairn Gorm. I do not know the Name of George's ship—the Name of the Port he has gone to is Philadelphia when(c) he will travel to the Settlement across the Country—I will tell you all about this when I see you—The Title of my last Book is 'Endymion' you shall have one soon. I would not advise you to play on the Flageolet however I will get you one if you please. I will speak to Mr Abbey on what you say concerning school. I am sorry for your poor Canary. You shall have another volume of my first Book. My tooth Ache keeps on so that I cannot write with any pleasure—all I can say now is that you(r) Letter is a very nice one without fault and that you will hear from or see in a few days if ~~my~~ his throat will let him,

Your affectionate Brother  
John.

84. To FANNY KEATS. Tuesday 25 August 1818.

Address: Miss Keats | Miss Tucker's | Walthamstow

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 25 AU 1818.

Hampstead Tuesday

My dear Fanny,

I have just written to Mr Abbey to ask him to let you come and see poor Tom who has lately been much worse. He is better at present sends his Love to you and wishes much to see you—I hope he will shortly—I have not been able to come to Walthamstow on his account as well as a little Indisposition of my own. I have asked Mr A. to write me—if he does not mention any thing of it to you, I will tell you what reasons he has though I do not think he will make any objection. Write, me what you what (for

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want) with a Flageolet and I will get one ready for you by the time you come.

Your affectionate Brother

John—

85. To JANE REYNOLDS. *Tuesday 1 September 1818.*

*Address:* Miss Reynolds | Little Britain—

*Postmark:* 1 SP 1818.

Well Walk Sept<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>st</sup>.

My dear Jane,

Certainly your kind note would rather refresh than than trouble me, and so much the more would your coming if as you say, It could be done without agitating my Brother too much. Receive on your Hearth our deepest thanks for your Solicitude concerning us.

I am glad John is not hurt, but gone safe<sup>1</sup> into Devonshire—I shall be in great expectation of his Letter—but the promise of it in so anxious and friendly a way I prize more than a hundred. I shall be in town to day on some business with my guardian<sup>2</sup> 'as was' with scarce a hope of being able to call on you. For these two last days Tom has been more cheerful; you shall hear again soon how he will be—

Remember us particularly to your Mother.

Your sincere friend

John Keats—

86. To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE. *Monday 21 Sept. 1818.*

*Address:* C. W. Dilke Esq<sup>re</sup> | —Snook's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Bedhampton | near Havant—Hants.

*Postmark:* 21 SP 1818.

My dear Dilke,

According to the Wentworth place Bulletin you have left Brighton much improved: therefore now a few lines will be more of a pleasure than a bore. I have a few things

<sup>1</sup> The word in the original might possibly be 'sane'; but it is more probably 'save', written in mistake for 'safe'. Reynolds went to Brighton on business and was overturned just outside his friend Hunt's old residence in Horsemonger Lane.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Abbey.

to say to you and would fain begin upon them in this fo(u)rth line: but I have a Mind too well regulated to proceed upon any thing without due preliminary remarks—you may perhaps have observed that in the simple process of eating radishes I never begin at the root but constantly dip the little green head in the salt—that in the Game of Whist if I have an ace I constantly play it first. So how can I with any face begin without a dissertation on letter writing—Yet when I consider that a sheet of paper contains room only for three pages, and a half how can I do justice to such a pregnant subject? however as you have seen the history of the world stamped as it were by a diminishing glass in the form of a chronological Map, so will I ‘with retractile claws’<sup>1</sup> draw this in to the form of a table—whereby it will occupy merely the remainder of this first page<sup>2</sup>—

Folio - - -	Parsons, Lawyers, Statesmen, Phys(ic)ians out of place—Ut—Eustace—Thornton out of practice or on their travels—
Foolscap—	1 superfine rich or noble poets—ut Byron. 2 common ut egomet—.
Quarto—	Projectors, Patentees, Presidents, Potatoe growers—
Bath	Boarding schools, and suburbans in general
Gilt edge	Dandies in general, male female and literary—
Octavo or tears	All who make use of a lascivious seal—
Duodec.	May be found for the most part on Milli- ners and Dressmakers Parlour tables—
Strip	At the Playhouse doors, or any where—
Slip	Being but a variation—
Snip	So called from its size being disguised by a twist—

I suppose you will have heard that Hazlitt has on foot a prosecution against Blackwood.<sup>3</sup> I dined with him a few

<sup>1</sup> Cary’s ‘Dante: Inferno’, xvii. 101.

<sup>2</sup> As indeed it did.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine’, August 1818, besides an article entitled ‘Hazlitt Cross-questioned’, full of insolent personal abuse, had a paper on Shakespeare’s Sonnets, in which also Hazlitt was insulted. In the same number appeared ‘The Cockney School of Poets.—No. IV’ in which Keats was attacked. But on this his letters are silent till the 9th of October, and then he writes only in reply to Hessey.

days since at Hessey's—there was not a word said about *(it)*, though I understand he is excessively vexed—Reynolds by what I hear is almost over happy<sup>1</sup> and Rice is in town. I have not seen him, nor shall I for some time as my throat has become worse after getting well, and I am determined to stop at home till I am quite well. I was going to Town tomorrow with M<sup>rs</sup> D. but I thought *(t)* it best to ask her excuse this morning—I wish I could say Tom was any better. His identity<sup>2</sup> presses upon me so all day that I am obliged to go out—and although I intended to have given some time to study alone I am obliged to write, and plunge into abstract images to ease myself of his countenance his voice and feebleness—so that I live now in a continual fever—it must be poisonous to life although I feel well. Imagine 'the hateful siege of contraries'<sup>3</sup>—if I think of fame of poetry it seems a crime to me, and yet I must do so or suffer—I am sorry to give you pain—I am almost resolv'd to burn this—but I really have not self possession and magnanimity enough to manage the thing otherwise—after all it may be a nervousness proceeding from the Mercury—

Bailey I hear is gaining his Spirits and he will yet be what I once thought impossible a cheerful Man—I think he is not quite so much spoken of in Little Britain. I forgot to ask M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke if she had any thing she wanted to say immediately to you—This morning look'd so unpromising that I did not think she would have gone—but I find she has on sending for some volumes of Gibbon. I was in a little *funk* yesterday, for I sent an unseal'd note of *sham* abuse, until I recollected from what I had heard Charles say, that the servant could neither read nor write—not even to her Mother as Charles observed. I have just had a Letter from Reynolds—he is going on gloriously The following is a translation of a Line of Ronsard—

'Love poured her Beauty into my warm veins'<sup>4</sup>—

You have passed your Romance and I never gave into it or else I think this line a feast for one of your Lovers—How goes it with Brown?

Your sincere friend  
John Keats—

<sup>1</sup> Presumably concerning his engagement to Miss Drewe.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letters 93, p. 227 and 123, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> 'Paradise Lost', ix. 121, 122. <sup>4</sup> See Letter 87, to Reynolds, p. 216.

87. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. (Tuesday 22 Sept. 1818?)<sup>1</sup>

My dear Reynolds,

Believe me I have rather rejoiced in your happiness than fretted at your silence. Indeed I am grieved on your account that I am not at the same time happy—But I conjure you to think at present of nothing but pleasure “Gather the rose, &c.”<sup>2</sup>—Gorge the honey of life. I pity you as much that it cannot last for ever, as I do myself now drinking bitters.—Give yourself up to it—you cannot help it—and I have a consolation in thinking so. I never was in love—yet the voice and the shape of a Woman<sup>3</sup> has haunted me these two days—at such a time when the relief, the feverous relief of Poetry seems a much less crime—This morning Poetry has conquered—I have relapsed into those abstractions which are my only life—I feel escaped from a new strange and threatening sorrow.—and I am thankful for it.<sup>4</sup>—There is an awful warmth about my heart like a load of Immortality.

<sup>1</sup> Woodhouse notes ‘no date, or place, or postmark’.

<sup>2</sup> Ausonius (‘Idyll.’ xiv, l. 49) has

Collige, virgo, rosas dum flos novus et nova pubes.

and Tasso (‘Gerusalemme Liberata’, xvi. 15, l. 7) has ‘Cogliam d’amor la rosa’. Burton (‘Anatomy of Melancholy’, Pt. III, Sec. II, Mem. 5. Sub. 5) quotes Ausonius, and Keats in his copy of the book (Dilke Collection) added in the margin ‘Cogliam la rosa d’amore;’ followed by ‘ubique’ underlined. ‘Gather the rose of love’ (‘Faerie Queen’, II. xii. lxxv) and Herrick’s ‘Gather ye rosebuds while ye may’ were probably familiar to Keats, yet in view of his interest in Ronsard evinced in this and the preceding letter I think Mrs. Gladys Una Remington is right in her suggestion that Keats’s source was the last two lines of the Frenchman’s ‘Sonnet pour Hélène’—

Vivez, si m’en croyez, n’attendez à demain;

Cueillez dès aujourd’huy les roses de la vie.

<sup>3</sup> The lady here referred to was Miss Jane Cox, a cousin of the Reynoldses. Not being pleased with Reynolds’s sisters in this connexion, as will be seen from Letter 94, pp. 232–3, Keats’s natural delicacy would prevent his saying who the woman was.

<sup>4</sup> It must have been very soon after this that Keats met Fanny Brawne; for, in the annotated copy of the ‘Life, Letters, &c.’ frequently referred to, C. W. Dilke records that about October or November 1818 Keats ‘met Miss Brawne for the first time at my house. Brown let his house when he and Keats went to Scotland to Mrs. Brawne, a stranger to all of us. As the house adjoined mine in a large garden, we almost necessarily became acquainted. When Brown returned, the Brawnes took another house at the top of Downshire Hill; but we kept up our acquaintance and no doubt Keats, who was daily with me, met her soon after his return from Teignmouth.’ For ‘Teignmouth’ we should read ‘Scotland’: the mistake was Lord Houghton’s in misplacing a letter to Bailey so as to make it seem that Keats went

Poor Tom—that woman—and Poetry were ringing changes in my senses.—Now I am in comparison happy—I am sensible this will distress you—you must forgive me. Had I known you would have set out so soon I could have sent you the ‘Pot of Basil’ for I had copied it Here is a free translation of a Sonnet of Ronsard, which I think will please you—I have the loan<sup>1</sup> of his works—they have great Beauties.

Nature withheld Cassandra in the skies,  
 For more adornment, a full thousand years;  
 She took their cream of Beauty’s fairest dyes,  
 And shap’d and tinted her above all Peers:  
 Meanwhile Love kept her dearly with his wings,  
 And underneath their shadow fill’d her eyes  
 With such a richness that the cloudy Kings  
 Of high Olympus utter’d slavish sighs.  
 When from the Heavens I saw her first descend,  
 My heart took fire, and only burning pains,  
 They were my pleasures—they my Life’s sad end;  
 Love pour’d her beauty into my warm veins.

— — — — —  
 — — — — —

I had not the original by me when I wrote it, and did not recollect the purport of the last lines—<sup>2</sup>

I should have seen Rice ere this—but I am confined by Sawrey’s mandate in the house now, and have as yet only gone out in fear of the damp night—You know what an undangerous matter it is. I shall soon be quite recovered—Your offer I shall remember as though it had even now taken place in fact—I think it cannot be—Tom is not up yet—I cannot say he is better. I have not heard from George.

Yr affecte friend  
 John Keats.

to Teignmouth again on returning from the north.—H.B.F. To this it may be added that in September, 1820, Fanny Brawne stated that she had known Keats for two years.

<sup>1</sup> From Richard Woodhouse.

<sup>2</sup> Although Woodhouse thought he had the final couplet, it has not come down to us. Ronsard has

Qu’autres plaisirs ie ne sens que mes peines,  
 Ny autre bien qu’adorer son pourtrait.

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. *Friday 25 Sept. 1818.*

*Address:* John Keats Esq | Well Walk | Hampstead | London.

*Postmarks:* BRIDGEWATER and SE 26 1818

Bridgewater, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>

My dear Keats

Here I am as Shakespeare says "Chewing the cud of sweet & bitter fancy,"<sup>1</sup> solitary in the midst of society with no human being to exchange a notion with except my sister—and she begins to be so occupied with her little brats that if I attempt to quote Shakespeare to her—I am ordered into silence for fear I should wake the Children.—I came here for repose of mind—as I am now getting better I am again on the rack to be again in the midst of all the objects of my ambition.—I am getting about again my hero—and I hope to God I shall yet finish my picture to the satisfaction of all of you.—I am longing to be among you—and hear your account of your last Tour—if it has done as much good to the *inside* as the outside of your head you will feel the effects of it as long as you live.—I shall leave this place tomorrow—or Monday & hope to be in Town by Wednesday at furthest. I hope your brother Tom does not suffer much—poor fellow—I shall never forget his look when I saw him last.—I can never say as much when I dictate a letter<sup>2</sup> as when I write it myself—and this I hope will be a sufficient excuse for not writing a longer one to you—at any rate this is better treatment than you gave me when you went on your Tour.—Believe me my dear Keats most affectionately & sincerely

Yours ever

B R Haydon.

P.S. to give you an idea of the elegant taste of this place the other day, in company when I illustrated something by a quotation, one of the company said with great simplicity, "Lord Mr Haydon, you are full of *scrap*s!"—adieu—my eyes will not permit me.

88. To FANNY KEATS. *Friday 9 October 1818.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | Miss Tuckey's | Walthamstow—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 9 OC 1818.

My dear Fanny,

Poor Tom is about the same as when you saw him last; perhaps weaker—were it not for that I should have been over to pay you a visit these fine days I got to the Stage half an hour before it set out and counted the buns and tarts in a Pastrycooks window and was just beginning with the Jellies. There was no one in the Coach who had

<sup>1</sup> 'As You Like It', iv. iii. 103; but 'food', not 'cud'.

<sup>2</sup> Only the signature and postscript are in Haydon's handwriting.

1818

Letter 90

a Mind to eat me like Mr Sham-deaf. I shall be punctual in enquiring about next Thursday—

Your affectionate Brother  
John

89. To THOMAS RICHARDS. *Friday 9 October 1818.*

*No address or postmark.*

My dear Richards,

I think the fortnight has passed in which I promised to call on you—I have not been able to come—My Brother Tom gets weaker every day and I am not able to leave him for more than a few hours. As I know you will be anxious about us, if I cannot come I will send you now and then a note of this nature that you may see how we are. Remember me to Mrs R—and to Vincent.

Yours most sincerely  
John Keats

90. To JAMES AUGUSTUS HESSEY. *Friday 9 Oct. 1818.*

*Address:* J. A. Hessey Esq<sup>r</sup>, Fleet St.

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 9 OC 1818.

My dear Hessey,

You are very good in sending me the letter from the Chronicle<sup>1</sup>—and I am very bad in not acknowledging

89. Although Keats did not date it and the second leaf which would have borne the postmark, if it went through the post, is missing, there need be no question about the date of this letter. It is written in the same bold hand as Letter 88 to Fanny Keats and on paper of a similar size. Moreover, it is endorsed, by the recipient I do not doubt, '1818. | J Keats | 9 Oct<sup>r</sup>'. While it is more than probable that Keats wrote other letters to Richards, this is the only one that has come to light, and taken in conjunction with the fact that one of the Amena-Wells-Tom Keats fabrications was found with it in the archives of Thomas Richards's grandson, the Rev. John F. Richards, of Balliol, it is safe to conclude that Thomas, and not Charles, Richards, is the man who was the familiar friend of the poet.

<sup>1</sup> Two letters to the editor of 'The Morning Chronicle' printed in that paper on Saturday the 3rd and Thursday the 8th of October 1818.

<sup>2</sup> Sir, Although I am aware that literary squabbles are of too uninteresting and interminable a nature for your Journal, yet there are occasions when acts of malice and gross injustice towards an author may be properly brought before the public through such a medium.—Allow me, then, without further preface, to refer you to an article in the last Number of The Quarterly Review, professing to be a Critique on "The Poems of John Keats." Of John Keats I know nothing; from his Preface I collect that he is very young—no doubt a heinous sin; and I have been informed that he



such a kindness sooner.—pray forgive me.—It has so chanced that I have had that paper every day—I have seen today's. I cannot but feel indebted to those Gentle-

has incurred the additional guilt of an acquaintance with Mr. Leigh Hunt. That this latter Gentleman and the Editor of The Quarterly Review have long been at war, must be known to every one in the least acquainted with the literary gossip of the day. Mr. L. Hunt, it appears, has thought highly of the poetical talents of Mr. Keats; hence Mr. K. is doomed to feel the merciless tomahawk of the Reviewers, termed Quarterly, I presume from the *modus operandi*. From a perusal of the criticism, I was led to the work itself. I would, Sir, that your limits would permit a few extracts from this poem. I dare appeal to the taste and judgment of your readers, that beauties of the highest order may be found in almost every page—that there are also many, very many passages indicating haste and carelessness, I will not deny; I will go further, and assert that a real friend of the author would have dissuaded him from an immediate publication.

'Had the genius of Lord Byron sunk under the discouraging sneers of an Edinburgh Review the nineteenth century would scarcely yet have been termed the Augustan æra of Poetry. Let Mr. Keats too persevere—he has talents of <no> common stamp; this is the hastily written tribute of a stranger, who ventures to predict that Mr. K. is capable of producing a poem that shall challenge the admiration of every reader of true taste and feeling; nay if he will give up his acquaintance with Mr. Leigh Hunt, and apostatise in his friendships, his principles and his politics (if he have any), he may even command the approbation of the Quarterly Review.

'I have not heard to whom public opinion has assigned this exquisite morceau of critical acumen. If the Translator of Juvenal be its author, I would refer him to the manly and pathetic narrative prefixed to that translation, to the touching history of genius oppressed by and struggling with innumerable difficulties, yet finally triumphing under patronage and encouragement. If the Biographer of Kirke White have done Mr. Keats this cruel wrong, let him remember his own just and feeling expostulation with the Monthly Reviewer, who "sat down to blast the hopes of a boy, who had confessed to him all his hopes and all his difficulties." If the 'Admiralty Scribe' (for he too is a Reviewer) be the critic, let him compare the "Battle of Talavera" with "Endymion".

I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

J. S.'

The references in the last paragraph are so well chosen as to give some countenance to the suggestion that John Scott was the writer of the letter. But why not James Smith? The 'Translator of Juvenal' was of course William Gifford, the editor of 'The Quarterly Review'. The 'Biographer of Kirke White' was Robert Southey; and the author of 'The Battle of Talavera' was John Wilson Croker, Secretary of the Admiralty, who, like Southey, was one of the most prominent contributors to the 'Quarterly'. He it was who wrote the abominable article. I have seen no suggestion as to the identity of 'R. B.' who wrote the second letter, which reads thus:—

'Sir,—The spirited and feeling remonstrance of your correspondent J. S. against the cruelty and injustice of the Quarterly Review, has most ably anticipated the few remarks which I had intended to address to you on the subject. But your well known liberality in giving admission to every thing calculated to do justice to oppressed and injured merit, induces me to trespass further on your valuable columns, by a few extracts from Mr. Keat's <sic> Poem. As the Reviewer professes to have read only the first book, I have confined my quotations to that part of the Poem; and I leave your

men who have taken my part—As for the rest, I begin to get a little acquainted with my own strength and weakness.—Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic on his own Works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what Blackwood or the Quarterly could possibly inflict, and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary re-perception & ratification, of what is fine. J.S. is perfectly right in regard to the slipshod Endymion. That it is so is no fault of mine.—No!—though it may sound a little paradoxical. It is as good as I had power to make it—by myself. Had I been nervous about its being a perfect piece, & with that view asked advice, & trembled over every page, it would not have been written; for it is not in my nature to fumble—I will write independantly.—I have written independently *without Judgment.*—I may write independently, & *with Judgment* hereafter. The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man: It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation & watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself—In Endymion, I leaped headlong into the Sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the Soundings, the quicksands, & the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea & comfortable advice.—I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest. But I am nigh getting into a rant. So, with remembrances to Taylor and Woodhouse &c I am

Yrs very sincerely

John Keats.

readers to judge whether the Critic who could pass over such beauties as these lines contain, and condemn the whole Poem as “consisting of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language,” is very implicitly to be relied on.

I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

Temple, Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> 1818.

R. B.’

The extracts range over pages 12 to 42 of the original edition of ‘Endymion’.—H.B.F.

‘The Quarterly Review’ article had appeared in the number headed ‘April 1818’ on page 1, but described on the wrapper as ‘published in September, 1818’.

From JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS to KEATS, *Wednesday* (14 Oct. 1818).<sup>1</sup>

Address: Mr John Keats. | N<sup>o</sup> 1 Well Walk | Hampstead

Postmark: 4 o'Clock Oct 14. 18(18)

My Dear Keats

I was most delighted at seeing you yesterday,—for I hardly knew how I was to meet with you, situated as you are, and confined as I am. I wish I could have stayed longer with you. As to the Poem I am of all things anxious that you should publish it, for its completeness will be a full answer to all the ignorant malevolence of cold lying Scotchmen and stupid Englishmen. The *overweening* struggle to oppress you only shews the world that so much of Endeavour cannot be directed to nothing. Men do not set their muscles, and strain their Sinews to break a straw. I am confident, Keats, that the Pot of Basil hath that simplicity and quiet pathos, which are of sure Sovereignty over all hearts. I must say that it would delight me to have you prove yourself to the World, what we know you to be;—to have you Annul the Quarterly Review, by the best of all answers. When I see you, I will give you the Poem, and pray look it over with that eye to the *littlenesses* which the World are so fond of Excepting to (though I confess with that word altered which I mentioned, I see nothing that Can be cavilled at)—And let us have the Tale put forth, now that an interest is aroused. One or two of your Sonnets you might print, I am sure—And I know that I may suggest to you, which,—because you can decide as you like *afte(rwards)*. You will remember that we were (to prin)t together—~~but~~ I give over all intention and you ought to be alone. I can never write anything now—my mind is taken the other way:—But I shall set my heart on having you, high, as you ought to be. Do *you* get Fame,<sup>2</sup>—and I shall have it in being your affectionate and steady friend. There is no one I am more interested in—and there is no one that I have more pleasure in Communicating my Own happiness to. You will gratify me much by letting me have, whenever you have leisure, copies of what you write;—for *more than myself* have a sincere interest in you. When shall I see you—& when shall I go with you to Severn's

Your ever affection(ate)

Wedy Morn<sup>g</sup>

J. H. Reynolds

<sup>1</sup> This letter is printed from the holograph now among the Keats treasures in the Harvard College Library. It is clear that Reynolds was writing after his return from his 'six weeks enjoyment in Devonshire' (see Letter 94, p. 230), and that the six weeks began before the 1st of September (see Letter 85, p. 213). He had seen Keats since his return and had probably been home a few days before he wrote this letter on Wednesday the 14th of October.

<sup>2</sup> Keats had written 'Do you get health' in his letter to Reynolds of the 25th of March, number 58, p. 126.

91. To FANNY KEATS. *Friday 16 Oct. 1818.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | Miss Tuckey's | Walthamstow

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 16 OC 1818.

Hampstead Friday Morn

My dear Fanny,

You must not condemn me for not being punctual to Thursday, for I really did not know whether it would not affect poor Tom too much to see you. You know how it hurt him to part with you the last time. At all events you shall hear from me; and if Tom keeps pretty well tomorrow—I will see Mr Abbey the next day, and endeavour to settle that you shall be with us on Tuesday or Wednesday. I have good news from George. He has landed safely with our Sister—they are both in good health—their prospects are good—and they are by this time nighing to their journeys end—you shall hear the particulars soon—

Your affectionate Brother  
John—

Tom's love to you.

92. To FANNY KEATS. *Monday 26 Oct. 1818.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | Miss Tuckey's | Walthamstow—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 26 OC. 1818.

My dear Fanny,

I called on Mr Abbey in the beginning of last Week: when he seemed averse to letting you come again from having heard that you had been to other places besides Well Walk. I do not mean to say you did wrongly in speaking of it, for there should rightly be no objection to such things: but you know with what People we are obliged in the course of Childhood to associate; whose conduct forces us into duplicity and fa(l)shood to them. To the worst of People we should be openhearted: but it is as well as things are to be prudent in making any communication to any one, that may throw an impediment in the way of any of the little pleasures you may have. I do not recommend duplicity but prudence with such people. Perhaps I am talking too deeply for you: if you do not now, you will understand what I mean in the course of a few years. I think poor Tom is a little Better: he sends

his love to you. I shall call on M<sup>r</sup> Abbey tomorrow: when I hope to settle when to see you again. M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke has been for some time at Brighton—she is expected home in a day or two. She will be pleased I am sure with your present. I will try for permission for you to remain here all Night should M<sup>rs</sup> D. return in time.

Your affectionate Brother

John—

From RICHARD WOODHOUSE to KEATS. *Wednesday 21 Oct. 1818.*

*From a draft.*

My dear Keats,

Whilst in the country, from whence I am but lately returned, I met with that malicious, but weak & silly article on Endymion in the last Quarterly Review. God help the Critic, whoever he be! He is as ignorant of the rudiments of his own craft as of the Essentials of true Poetry. I take it the precious article in question once formed a portion of the critique in the former N<sup>o</sup> upon L. Hunt's foliage.—That the reviewer, in a moment of compunction, changed his plan, & reviewed Hunt's work by itself, intending to leave you alone; tho the scissors with which this sentence of divorce was car<sup>d</sup> into effect left in the earlier article a few traces of the orig<sup>l</sup> union.—But that the Editor, finding himself at a loss for a few pages of matter to eke out his pres<sup>t</sup> N<sup>o</sup>, bethought himself of the fragments of his former review, which he has cooked up afresh, as a side dish for his readers.—That his *very equitable* censures may have the effect of scaring from the perusal of the Work some of the "Dandy" readers, male & female, who love to be spared the trouble of judging for themselves, is to be expected. But with men of sense, (as the example of J.S. in the Chronicle proves) the effect must be the reverse—The Criticism is *felo de se*—It bears on its front the sentence of its own condemn<sup>g</sup>: for the reviewer in his indiscriminating stupidity, has laid his finger of contempt upon passages of such beauty, that no one with a spark of poetic feeling can read them without a desire to know more of the poem.—"If"—said a friend of mine at Bath, who had seen the critique, but not the work, "these are the worst passages, what must the best be". To be praised in the same review that slabbers with its eulogy Barrett's woman<sup>1</sup> would have been damnation. Such a pestering insect may annoy for a moment, but its impotent attacks can cause no permanent uneasiness.—And I am happy to see by the daily papers, that the crying injustice of the decision has roused indignation in a few who "do look with a jealous eye on the honor of English literature"<sup>2</sup>. But enough of such a cobbling, carping, decasyllabic, finger-scanning, criticaster.—

<sup>1</sup> Eaton Stannard Barrett's 'Woman: a Poem' was reviewed in the same issue of the 'The Quarterly'.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to 'Endymion'.

His hour of "brief authority"<sup>1</sup> must be nigh over. His blindness will soon work its own way into the earth.—

The appearance of this "critical morsel", however, determines me to address you on the subject of our late conversation at Hessey's, on which I have often since reflected, and never without a degree of pain—I may have misconceived you; but I understood you to say, you thought there was now nothing original to be written in poetry; that its riches were already exhausted, & all its beauties forestalled—& that you should, consequently, write no more.—I cannot assent to your premises, and I most earnestly deprecate your conclusion.—For my part I believe most sincerely, that the wealth of poetry is unexhausted & inexhaustible—The ideas derivable to us from our senses singly and in their various combin<sup>ns</sup> with each other store the mind with endless images of natural beauty the Passions life & motion & reflection & the moral sense give adn (<for additional>) relief & harmony to this mighty world of *inanimate* matter.—It is in the *gleaning* of the highest, the truest & the sweetest of these ideas, in the orderly grouping of them, & *arraying* them in the garb of exquisite numbers, that Poetry may be said to consist.—It is then for the Poeta factus, the imitator of others, who sings only as has been sung, to say that our measure of poesy is full, & that there is nothing new to be written, thus charging upon "most innocent nature"<sup>2</sup> a dearth exist<sup>s</sup> only in his own dull brain—But the poëta natus, the true born son of Genius, who creates for himself the world in which his own fancy ranges, who culls from it fair forms of truth beauty & purity & apparels them in *hues* chosen by himself should hold a different language—he need never fear that the treasury he draws upon can be exhausted, nor despair of being always able to make an original selection.

It is true that in this age; the mass are not of soul to conceive of themselves or even to apprehend when presented to them, the truly & simply beautiful of poetry.—A taste vitiated by the sweetmeats & kickshaws of the past century may be the reason of this. Still fewer of this generation are capable of properly embodying the high conceptions they may have—and of the last number few are the individuals who do not allow their fire & originality to be damped by apprehensions of shallow censures from the groveling & the "cold hearted". In these "evil days however & these evil tongues"<sup>3</sup> (in the spirit of truth & sincerity & not of flattery I say it) I believe there has appeared one bard who "preserves his vessel" in purity independance & honor—who judges of the beautiful for himself, careless who thinks with him—who pursues his own selfappointed & selfapproved course right onward—who stoops not from his flight to win sullied breath from the multitude—and who "leans away for highest heaven, and sings,<sup>4</sup> pointing <illegible>" to a standard of excellence dimly visible as yet even to himself, & scarcely free from the shadows in which from unknown time it has been vested and of which the meaner spirits of his day seem to be without even a conception—And shall such a one, upon whom anxious eyes are fixed, at whose noble aspirings "unnumbered souls breathe out a *still* applause",<sup>5</sup> be dismayed at the yelpings

<sup>1</sup> 'Measure for Measure', II. ii. 118.

<sup>3</sup> 'Paradise Lost', vii. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Sonnet to Haydon, l. 3.

<sup>2</sup> 'Comus', 762.

<sup>4</sup> 'Endymion', iv. 568.

of the tuneless, the envious, the malignant or the undiscerning? or shall he fall into the worse error of supposing that there is left no corner of the universal heaven of poesy unvisited by Wing?<sup>1</sup> Shall he subtract himself from the expectations of his country; and leave its ear & its soul to be soothed only by the rhymers & the coupleteers? Shall he let "so fair a house fall to decay"<sup>2</sup>—and shall he give the land which let Chatterton & K. White die of unkindness & neglect,—but which yet retained the grace to weep over their ashes, no opportunity of redeeming its Character, & paying the vast debt it owes to Genius?—Your conduct, my Dear Keats, must give these Questions an answer.—

"Know thine own worth, and reverence the lyre"!—

The world, I hope & trust, is not quite so dead dull and ungrateful as you may have apprehended—or as a few malevolent spirits may have given you reason to imagine. It contains, I know, many who have a warm "affection for the cause Of stedfast Genius toiling gallantly",<sup>3</sup>—many who, tho' personally unknown to you, look with the eye of hope & anticipation to your future course—but very few who in sincere wishes for your welfare, & passion for your fame, exceed, Dear Keats,

Yours most truly,

Rich<sup>d</sup> Woodhouse

Temple 21<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1818.

93. To RICHARD WOODHOUSE. *Tuesday 27 Oct. 1818.*

*Address:* Rich<sup>d</sup>. Woodhouse Esq<sup>re</sup> | Temple—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 27 OC 1818.

My dear Woodhouse,

Your Letter gave me a great satisfaction; more on account of its friendliness, than any relish of that matter in it which is accounted so acceptable in the 'genus irritabile'.<sup>4</sup> The best answer I can give you is in a clerk-like manner to make some observations on two principle points, which seem to point like indices into the midst of the whole pro and con, about genius, and views and achievements and ambition and cœtera. 1<sup>st</sup>. As to the poetical Character itself (I mean that sort of which, if I am any thing, I am a Member; that sort distinguished from the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone) it is not itself—it has no self—it is every thing and nothing—It has no character—it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated—It has

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Paradise Lost', iii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Sonnet to Haydon, ll. 9–10.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, Sonnet xiii. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Horace, *Epistles*, ii. ii. 102.

as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen.<sup>1</sup> What shocks the virtuous philosopher, delights the camelion Poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things any more than from its taste for the bright one; because they both end in speculation. A Poet is the most unpoetical of any thing in existence; because he has no Identity<sup>1</sup>—he is continually in for—<sup>2</sup> and filling some other Body—The Sun, the Moon, the Sea and Men and Women who are creatures of impulse are poetical and have about them an unchangeable attribute—the poet has none; no identity—he is certainly the most unpoetical of all God's Creatures. If then he has no self, and if I am a Poet, where is the Wonder that I should say I would ~~right~~ write no more? Might I not at that very instant have been cogitating on the Characters of Saturn and Ops?<sup>3</sup> It is a wretched thing to confess; but is a very fact that not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature—how can it, when I have no nature? When I am in a room with People if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself: but the identity of every one in the room begins to (*for so*) to press upon me that I am in a very little time an(*ni*)hilated—not only among Men; it would be the same in a Nursery of children: I know not whether I make myself wholly understood: I hope enough so to let you see that no dependence is to be placed on what I said that day.

In the second place I will speak of my views, and of the life I purpose to myself. I am ambitious of doing the world some good: if I should be spared that may be the work of maturer years—in the interval I will assay to reach to as high a summit in Poetry as the nerve bestowed upon me will suffer. The faint conceptions I have of Poems to come brings the blood frequently into my forehead. All I hope is that I may not lose all interest in human affairs—that the solitary indifference I feel for applause even from the finest Spirits, will not blunt any acuteness of vision I may

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letters 86, p. 215 and 123, p. 312.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. G. Beaumont in 'The Times Literary Supplement', February 27 and May 1, 1930, suggests that Keats intended to write 'informing'. The facts are that the words 'in' and 'for', the last words on the page, are written closer together than other words on the same page, that they are followed by a dash which might very well be read as a hyphen, and that 'informing' is in every way an improvement to an otherwise clumsy parenthesis.

<sup>3</sup> In 'Hyperion'.



have. I do not think it will—I feel assured I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the Beautiful even if my night's labours should be burnt every morning, and no eye ever shine upon them. But even now I am perhaps not speaking from myself: but from some character in whose soul I now live. I am sure however that this next sentence is from myself. I feel your anxiety, good opinion and friendliness in the highest degree, and am

Your's most sincerely  
John Keats

94. To GEORGE AND GEORGIANA KEATS. (*Wednesday 14–Saturday 31*) Oct. 1818.

*No address or postmark.*

My dear George;

There was a part in your Letter which gave me a great deal of pain, that where you lament not receiving Letters from England—I intended to have written immediately on my return from Scotland (which was two Months earlier than I had intended on account of my own as well as Tom's health) but then I was told by ~~Haslam~~ Mrs W(ylie) that you had said you would not wish any one to write till we had heard from you. This I thought odd and now I see that it could not have been so; yet at the time I suffered my unreflecting head to be satisfied and went on in that sort of abstract careless and restless Life with which you are well acquainted. This sentence should it give you any uneasiness do not let it last for before I finish it will be explained away to your satisfaction—

I am grieved to say that I am not sorry you had not Letters at Philadelphia; you could have had no good news of Tom and I have been withheld on his account from beginning these many days; I could not bring myself to say the truth, that he is no better but much worse—However it must be told and you must my dear Brother and Sister take example from me and bear up against any Calamity for my sake as I do for your's. Our's are ties which independent of their own Sentiment are sent us by providence to prevent the deleterious effects of one great, solitary grief. I have Fanny<sup>1</sup> and I have you—three

<sup>1</sup> His sister, Fanny Keats.

people whose Happiness to me is sacred—and it does annul that selfish sorrow which I should otherwise fall into, living as I do with poor Tom who looks upon me as his only comfort—the tears will come into your Eyes—let them—and embrace each other—thank heaven for what happiness you have and after thinking a moment or two that you suffer in common with all Mankind hold it not a Sin to regain your cheerfulness—

I will relieve you of one uneasiness of overleaf: I retur(n)ed I said on account of my health—I am now well from a bad sore throat which came of bog trotting in the Island of Mull—of which you shall hear by the coppies I shall make from my Scotch Letters—

Your content in each other is a delight to me which I cannot express—the Moon is now shining full and brilliant—she is the same to me in Matter, what you are to me in Spirit—If you were here my dear Sister I could not pronounce the words which I can write to you from a distance; I have a tenderness for you, and an admiration which I feel to be as great and more chaste than I can have for any woman in the world. You will mention Fanny—her character is not formed, her identity does not press upon me as yours does. I hope from the bottom of my heart that I may one day feel as much for her as I do for you—I know not how it is, but I have never made any acquaintance of my own—nearly all through your medium my dear Brother—through you I know not only a Sister but a glorious human being—And now I am talking of those to whom you have made me known I cannot forbear mentioning Haslam as a most kind and obliging and constant friend—His behaviour to Tom during my absence and since my return has endeared him to me for ever—besides his anxiety about you. Tomorrow I shall call on your Mother and exchange information with her—On Tom's account I have not been able to pass so much time with her as I would otherwise have done—I have seen her but twice—on(c)e I dined with her and Charles—She was well, in good Spirits and I kept her laughing at my bad jokes—We went to tea at M<sup>rs</sup> Millar's and in going were particularly struck with the light and shade through the Gate way at the Horse Guards. I intend to write you such Volumes that it will be impossible for me to keep any order or method in what I write: that will

come first which is uppermost in my Mind, not that which is uppermost in my heart—besides I should wish to give you a picture of our Lives here whenever by a touch I can do it; even as you must see by the last sentence our walk past Whitehall all in good health and spirits—this I am certain of, because I felt so much pleasure from the simple idea of your playing a game at Cricket—At M<sup>rs</sup> Millars I saw Henry quite well—there was Miss Keasle—and the good-natured Miss Waldegrave—M<sup>rs</sup> Millar began a long story and you know it is her Daughter's way to help her on as though her tongue were ill of the gout—M<sup>rs</sup> M. certainly tells a Story as though she had been taught her Alphabet in Crutched Friars. Dilke has been very unwell; I found him very ailing on my return—he was under Medical care for some time, and then went to the Sea Side whence he has returned well—Poor little M<sup>rs</sup> D— has had another gall-stone attack; she was well ere I returned—she is now at Brighton—Dilke was greatly pleased to hear from you and will write a Letter for me to enclose—He seems greatly desirous of hearing from you of the Settlement itself—I came by ship from Inverness and was nine days at Sea without being Sick—a little Qualm now and then put me in mind of you—however as soon as you touch the shore all the horrors of Sickness are soon forgotten; as was the case with a Lady on board who could not hold her head up all the way. We had not been in the Thames an hour before her tongue began to some tune; paying off as it was fit she should all old scores. I was the only Englishman on board. There was a downright Scotchman who hearing that there had been a bad crop of Potatoes in England had brought some triumphant Specimens from Scotland—these he exhibited with national pride to all the Lightermen and Watermen from the Nore to the Bridge. I fed upon beef all the way; not being able to eat the thick Porridge which the Ladies managed to manage with large awkward horn spoons into the bargain. Severn has had a narrow escape of his Life from a Typhous fever: he is now gaining strength—Reynolds has returned from a six weeks enjoyment in Devonshire, he is well and persuades me to publish my pot of Basil as an answer to the attacks made on me in Blackwood's Magazine and the Quarterly Review.<sup>1</sup> There have been

<sup>1</sup> Cf. letter from Reynolds to Keats, p. 222.

two Letters in my defence in the Chronicle<sup>1</sup> and one in the Examiner, coppied from the Alfred Exeter paper and written by Reynolds—I do not know who wrote those in the ~~Quarterly~~ Chronicle—This is a mere matter of the moment—I think I shall be among the English Poets after my death. The Even as a Matter of present interest the attempt to crush me in the ~~Chro~~ Quarterly has only brought me more into notice and it is a common expression among book men “I wonder the Quarterly should cut its own throat.”

It does me not the least harm in Society to make me appear little and ridiculous: I know when a Man is superior to me and give him all due respect—he will be the last to laugh at me and as for the rest I feel that I make an impression upon them which insures me personal respect ~~while~~ while I am in sight whatever they may say when my back is turned—Poor Haydon’s eyes will not suffer him to proceed with his picture—he has been in the Country<sup>2</sup>—I have seen him but once since my return—I hurry matters together here because I do not know when the Mail sails—I shall enqu(i)re tomorrow and then shall know whether to be particular or general in my letter—you shall have at least two sheets a day till it does sail whether it be three days or a fortnight—and then I will begin a fresh one for the next Month. The Miss Reynoldses are very kind to me—but they have lately displeased me much and in this way—Now I am coming the Richardson. On my return the first day I called they were in a sort of taking or bustle about a Cousin of theirs who having fallen out with her Grandpapa in a serious manner was invited by M<sup>rs</sup> R—(eynolds) to take Asylum in her house—She is an east indian and ought to be her Grandfather’s Heir. At the time I called M<sup>rs</sup> R. was in conference with her up stairs and the young Ladies were warm in her praises down stairs calling her genteel, interesting and a thousand other pretty things to which I gave no heed, not being partial to 9 days wonders—Now all is completely changed—they hate her; and from what I hear she is not without faults—of a real kind: but she has othe(r)s which are more apt to make women of inferior charms hate her. She is not a Cleopatra, but she is at least a Charmian.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 90 and note.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter from Haydon to Keats, p. 218.

She has a rich eastern look; she has fine eyes and fine manners. When she comes into a room she makes an impression the same as the Beauty of a Leopardess. She is too fine and too con(s)cious of her Self to repulse any Man who may address her—from habit she thinks that nothing *particular*. I always find myself more at ease with such a woman; the picture before me always gives me a life and animation which I cannot possibly feel with any thing inferior—I am at such times too much occupied in admiring to be awkward or on a tremble. I forget myself entirely because I live in her. You will by this time think I am in love with her; so before I go any further I will tell you I am not—she kept me awake one Night as a tune of Mozart's might do—I speak of the thing as a passtime and an amuzement than which I can feel none deeper than a conversation with an imperial woman the very 'yes' and 'no' of whose Lips is to me a Banquet. I dont cry to take the moon home with me in my Pocket not (<for nor>) do I fret to leave her behind me. I like her and her like because one has no *sensations*—what we both are is taken for granted—You will suppose I have by this had much talk with her—no such thing—there are the Miss Reynoldses on the look out—They think I dont admire her because I did not stare at her—They call her a flirt to me—What a want of Knowledge? She walks across a room in such a manner that a Man is drawn towards her with a magnetic Power. This they call flirting! they do not know things. They do not know what a Woman is. I believe tho' she has faults—the same as Charmian and Cleopatra might have had. Yet she is a fine thing speaking in a worldly way: for there are two distinct tempers of mind in which we judge of things—the worldly, theatrical and pantomimical; and the unearthly, spiritual and etherial—in the former Buonaparte, Lord Byron and this Charmian hold the first place in our Minds; in the latter John Howard, Bishop Hooker<sup>1</sup> rocking his child's cradle and you my dear Sister are the conquering feelings. As a Man in the world I love the rich talk of a Charmian; as an eternal Being I love the thought of you. I should like her to ruin me, and I should like you to save me.<sup>2</sup> Do not

<sup>1</sup> John Howard (1726?–1790), philanthropist. Richard Hooker (1554?–1600), author of 'Laws of Ecclesiastical Politic'; not a Bishop.

<sup>2</sup> For an allusion to this cousin, see Letter 87, p. 216. Miss Jane Cox

think my dear Brother from this that my Passions are headlong or likely to be ever of any pain to you—no

“I am free from Men of Pleasure’s cares,  
By dint of feelings far more deep than theirs”

This is Lord Byron,<sup>1</sup> and is one of the finest things he has said—I have no town talk for you, as I have not been much among people—as for Politics they are in my opinion only sleepy because they will soon be too wide awake—Perhaps not—for the long and continued Peace of England itself has given us notions of personal safety which are likely to prevent the re-establishment of our national Honesty—There is of a truth nothing manly or sterling in any part of the Government. There are many Madmen In the Country, I have no doubt, who would like to be beheaded on tower Hill merely for the sake of eclat, there are many Men like Hunt who from a principle of taste would like to see things go on better, there are many like Sir F. Burdett who like to sit at the head of political dinners—but there are none prepared to suffer in obscurity for their Country—the motives of our wo(r)st Men are interest and of our best Vanity—We have no Milton, no Algernon Sidney—Governors in these days loose the title of Man in exchange for that of Diplomat and Minister We breathe in a sort of Official Atmosphere—All the departments of Government have strayed far from Spimpicity which is the greatest of Strength—there is as much difference in this respect between the present Government and oliver Cromwell’s, as there is between the 12 Tables of Rome and the volumes of Civil Law which were digested by Justinian. A Man now entitlerd Chancellor has the same honour paid to him whether he be a Hog or a Lord Bacon. No sensation is created by Greatness but by the number of orders a Man has at his Button holes Notwithstand(ing) the part which the Liberals take in the Cause of Napoleon I cannot but think he has done more harm to the life of Liberty than any one else could have done: not that the divine right Gentlemen have done or intend to do any good—no they have taken a Lesson of him and will do

was born in India, and was a daughter of the only brother of Mrs. Reynolds, whose maiden name was Cox. The quarrel of the dark beauty Jane with her grandfather did not arise from bad temper, but from some other cause. Her grandfather was very fond of her; and they were ultimately reconciled.

<sup>1</sup> This is Leigh Hunt, not Byron; see ‘The Story of Rimini’, iii. 121–2.

all the further harm he would have done without any of the good—The worst thing he has done is, that he has taught them how to organize their monstrous armies—The Emperor Alexander it is said intends to divide his Empire as did Diocletian—creating two Czars besides himself, and continuing the supreme Monarch of the whole—Should he do this and they for a series of Years keep peaceable among themselves Russia may spread her conquest even to China—I think (it) a very likely thing that China itself may fall Turkey certainly will. Meanwhile european north Russia will hold its horns against the rest of Europe, intriguing constantly with France. Dilke, whom you know to be a Godwin perfectibil(it)y Man, pleases himself with the idea that America will be the country to take up the human intellect where england leaves off—I differ there with him greatly—A country like the united states whose greatest Men are Franklins and Washingtons will never do that—They are great Men doubtless but how are they to be compared to those our countreymen Milton and the two Sidneys—The one is a philosophical Quaker full of mean and thrifty maxims the other sold the very Charger who had taken him through all his Battles. Those Americans are great but they are not sublime Man—the humanity of the United States can never reach the sublime—Birkbeck's mind<sup>1</sup> is too much in the American Stryle—you must endeavour to infuse a little Spirit of another sort into the Settlement, always with great caution, for thereby you may do your descendents more good than you may imagine. If I had a prayer to make for any great good, next to Tom's recovery, it should be that one of your Children should be the first American Poet. I have a great mind to make a prophecy and they say prophecies work out their own fullfillment—

'Tis 'the witching time of night'<sup>2</sup>  
 Orbed is the Moon and bright  
 And the Stars they glisten, glisten  
 Seeming with bright eyes to listen  
 For what listen they?

<sup>1</sup> Morris Birkbeck bought 16,000 acres of public land in America, was known as the 'Emperor of the Prairies' by the backwoodsmen, and was drowned in June 1825. See also Letter 172, p. 452 and note 2.

<sup>2</sup> 'Hamlet', iii. ii. 413.

For a song and for a charm  
 See they glisten in alarm  
 And the Moon is waxing warm  
 To hear what I shall say.  
 Moon keep wide thy golden ears  
 Hearken Stars, and hearken Spheres  
 Hearken thou eternal Sky  
 I sing an infant's lullaby,  
 A pretty Lullaby!  
 Listen, Listen, listen, listen  
 Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten  
 And hear my lullaby?  
 Though the Rushes that will make  
 Its cradle still are in the lake:  
 Though the ~~l~~ linnen then that will be  
 Its swathe is on the cotton tree;  
 Though the wollen that will keep  
 It wa(r)m, is on the silly sheep;  
 Listen Stars light, listen, listen,  
 Glisten, Glisten, glisten, glisten  
 And hear my lullaby!  
 Child! I see thee! Child I've found thee  
 Midst of the quiet all around thee!<sup>1</sup>  
 Child I see thee! Ch(i)ld I spy thee  
 And thy mother sweet is nigh thee!—  
 Child I know thee! Child no more  
 But a Poet *evermore*  
 See, See the Lyre, the Lyre  
 In a flame of fire  
 Upon the little cradle's top  
 Flaring, flaring, flaring  
 Past the eyesight's bearing—  
 Awake it from its sleep  
 And see if it can keep  
 Its eyes upon the blaze.  
 Amaze, Amaze!  
 It stares, it stares, it stares  
 It dares what no one dares<sup>2</sup>  
 It lifts its little hand into the flame

<sup>1</sup> Keats wrote 'Midst of quiet all around thee!'—then inserted 'the' before 'around'—struck it out and put it before 'quiet'—and forgot to strike out 'of'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Keats: 'Daisy's Song', III. 1, 2.



Unharm'd, and on the strings  
 Paddles a little tune and ~~sings~~ sings  
 With dumb endeavour sweetly!  
 Bard art thou completely!  
 Little Child  
 O' the western wild  
 Bard art thou completely!—  
 Sweetly with dumb endeavour—  
 A Poet now or never!  
 Little Child  
 O' the western wild  
 A Poet now or never!

This is friday, I know not what day of the Month<sup>1</sup>—  
 I will enquire tomorrow for it is fit you should know the  
 time I am writing. I went to Town yesterday, and calling  
 at Mr<sup>s</sup> Millar's was told that your Mother would not be  
 found at home—I met Henry as I turned the corner—  
 I had no leisure to return, so I left the letters with him—  
 He was looking very well. Poor Tom is no better to-night  
 —I am affraid to ask him what Message I shall send from  
 him—And here I could go on complaining of my Misery,  
 but I will keep myself cheerful for your Sakes. With a  
 great deal of trouble I have succeeded in getting Fanny  
 to Hampstead—She has been several times. Mr Lewis<sup>2</sup> has  
 been very kind to Tom all the Summer there has scar(c)e  
 a day passed but he has visited him, and not one day with-  
 out bringing or sending some fruit of the nicest kind. He  
 has been very assiduous in his enquiries after you. It would  
 give the old Gentleman a great pleasure if you would send  
 him a Sheet enclosed in the next parcel to me, after you  
 receive this—how long it will be first—Why did I not write  
 to Philadelphia? Really I am sorry for that neglect—  
 I wish to go on writing ad infinitum, to you—I wish for  
 interesting matter, and a pen as swift as the wind—But

<sup>1</sup> 16th of October, 1818.

<sup>2</sup> Practically all we learn of Mr. Lewis from Keats is that he was a kind old gentleman of democratic tendencies. The Hampstead rate books record 'Mr. Israel Lewis' living in Well Walk (1815–21) in a house rented at £80 a year, and 'Mr. Lewis' living in the Vale of Health (1818–20) in a house of £35 annual rental. Keats mentions 'Mr. Lewis' five times and 'Mr. David Lewis' once (see Index). As the Keats brothers lived for a time in Well Walk one would be inclined to think Mr. Israel Lewis was their friend and that David was his second name; but the claim of Mr. Lewis of the Vale of Health to their friendship and the name of David is almost as strong.

the fact is I go so little into the Crowd now that I have nothing fresh and fresh every day to speculate upon, except my own Whims and Theroies. I have been but once to Haydon's, once to Hunt's, once to Rice's, once to Hesse's. I have not seen Taylor, I have not been to the Theatre—Now if I had been many times to all these and was still in the habit of going I could on my return at night have each day something new to tell you of without any stop—But now I have such a dearth that when I get to the end of this sentence and to the bottom of this page I much *(for must)* wait till I can find something interesting to you before I begin another.<sup>1</sup>—After all it is not much matter what it may be about; for the very words from such a distance penned by this hand will be grateful to you—even though I were to copy out the tale of Mother Hubbard or Little Red Riding Hood—I have been over to Dilke's this evening—there with Brown we have been talking of different and indifferent Matters—of Euclid, of Metaphysics of the Bible, of Shakspeare, of the horrid System and consequence of the fagging at great Schools—I know not yet how large a parcel I can send—I mean by way of Letters—I hope there can be no objection to my dowing up a *qui(r)e* made into a small compass—That is the manner in which I shall write. I shall send you more than Letters—I mean a tale—which I must begin on account of the activity of my Mind; of its inability to remain at rest. It must be prose and not very exciting. I must do this because in the way I am at present situated I have too many interruptions to a train of feeling to be able to *w(r)ite* Poetry—So I shall write this Tale, and if I think it worth while get a duplicate made before I send it off to you—

This is a fresh beginning the 21<sup>st</sup> October. Charles and Henry were with us on Sunday and they brought me your Letter to your Mother—we agreed to get a Packet off to you as soon as possible. I shall dine with your Mother tomorrow, when they have promised to have their Letters ready. I shall send as soon as possible without thinking of the little you may have from me in the first parcel, as I intend as I said before to begin another Letter of more regular information. Here I want to communicate so largely in a little time that I am puzzled where to direct

<sup>1</sup> The turn of the page comes here.

my attention. Haslam has promised to let me know from Capper and Hazlewood. For want of something better I shall proceed to give you some extracts from my Scotch Letters—Yet now I think on it why not send you the letters themselves—I have three of them at present. I believe Haydon has two<sup>1</sup> which I will get in time.<sup>2</sup> I dined with your Mother & Henry at Mr<sup>s</sup> Millar's on thursday when they gave me their Letters Charles's I have not yet—he has promised to send it. The thought of sending my scotch Letters has determined me to enclose a few more which I have received and which will give you the best cue to how I am going on better than you could otherwise know—Your Mother was well and I was sorry I could not stop later. I called on Hunt yesterday—it has been always my fate to meet Ollier<sup>3</sup> there—On thursday I walked with Hazlitt as far as covent Garden: he was going to play Rackets—I think Tom has been rather better these few last days—he has been less nervous. I expect Reynolds tomorrow Since I wrote thus far I have met with that same Lady again, whom I saw at Hastings and whom I met when we were going to the English Opera. It was in a Street which goes from Bedford Row to Lamb's Conduit Street—I passed her and turned back—she seemed glad of it; glad to see me and not offended at my passing her before. We walked on towards Islington where we called on a friend of her's who keeps a Boarding School. She has always been an enigma to me—she has ~~new~~ been in a Room with you and with Reynolds and wishes we should be acquainted without any of our common acquaintance knowing it. As we went along, some times through shabby, sometimes through decent Street(s) I had my guessing at work, not knowing what it would be and prepared to meet any surprise—First it ended at this House at Islington: on parting from which I pressed to attend her home. She

<sup>1</sup> Haydon certainly had two of the Scotch letters, No. 77 posted at Glasgow on July the 14th, and No. 81 posted at Inverness on August the 6th. There is good reason to believe that Keats did not recover and send them to America.

<sup>2</sup> At this point there was clearly a break though there is no new paragraph commenced. The last fresh beginning was that of Wednesday the 21st of October: he was to dine with the Wylies on the Thursday, and receive their letters for enclosure, which he had duly done. It seems likely that he reopened his own letter on Saturday the 24th, and was expecting Reynolds on the Sunday. The adventure with the Hastings-Bloomsbury lady probably took place on Saturday afternoon and was chronicled in the evening.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 47, p. 100 and note 4.

consented, and then again my thoughts were at work what it might lead to, tho' now they had received a sort of genteel hint from the Boarding School. Our Walk ended in 34 Gloucester Street, Queen Square—not exactly so for we went up stairs into her sitting room—a very tasty sort of place with Books, Pictures a bronze statue of Buonaparte, Music, æolian Harp; a Parrot, a Linnet—a Case of choice Liqueurs &c. &c. &c. She behaved in the kindest manner—made me take home a Grouse for Tom's dinner—Asked for my address for the purpose of sending more game—As I had warmed with her before and kissed her—I thought it would be living backwards not to do so again—she had a better taste: she perceived how much a thing of course it was and shrunk from it—not in a prudish way but in as I say a good taste. She contrived to disappoint me in a way which made me feel more pleasure than a simple Kiss could do—She said I should please her much more if I would only press her hand and go away. Whether she was in a different disposition when I saw her before—or whether I have in fancy wrong'd her I cannot tell. I expect to pass some pleasant hours with her now and then: in which I feel I shall be of service to her in matters of knowledge and taste: if I can I will. I have no libidinous thought about her—she and your George are the only women à peu près de mon age whom I would be content to know for their mind and friendship alone. I shall in a short time write you as far as I know how I intend to pass my Life—I cannot think of those things now Tom is so unwell and weak. Notwithstanding your Happiness and your recommendation I hope I shall never marry. Though the most beautiful Creature were waiting for me at the end of a Journey or a Walk; though the carpet were of Silk, the Curtains of the morning Clouds; the chairs and Sofa stuffed with Cygnet's down; the food Manna, the Wine beyond Claret, the Window opening on Winander mere, I should not feel—or rather my Happiness would not be so fine, ~~and~~ my Solitude is sublime. Then instead of what I have described, there is a Sublimity to welcome me home. The roaring of the wind is my wife and the Stars through the window pane are my Children. The mighty abstract Idea I have of Beauty in all things stifles the more divided and minute domestic happiness—an amiable wife and sweet Children I contemplate

as a part of that Beauty—but I must have a thousand of those beautiful particles to fill up my heart. I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone but in a thousand worlds. No sooner am I alone than shapes of epic greatness are stationed around me, and serve my Spirit the office of which is equivalent to a King's body guard—then 'Tragedy with scepter'd pall, comes sweeping by.'<sup>1</sup> According to my state of mind I am with Achilles shouting in the Trenches, or with Theocritus in the Vales of Sicily. Or I ~~through~~ my whole being into Triolus and repeating those lines, 'I wander, like a lost Soul upon the stygian Banks staying for waftage',<sup>2</sup> I melt into the air with a voluptuousness so delicate that I am content to be alone. These things combined with the opinion I have of the generallity of women—who appear to me as children to whom I would rather give a Sugar Plum than my time, form a barrier against Matrimony which I rejoice in. I have written this that you might see I have my share of the highest pleasures and that though I may choose to pass my days alone I shall be no Solitary. You see there is nothing spleenical in all this. The only thing that can ever effect me personally for more than one short passing day, is any doubt about my powers for poetry—I seldom have any, and I look with hope to the nighing time when I shall have none. I am as happy as a Man can be—that is in myself I should be happy if Tom was well, and I knew you were passing pleasant days—Then I should be most enviable—with the yearning Passion I have for the beautiful, connected and made one with the ambition of my intellect. Th*(i)*nk of my Pleasure in Solitude, in comparison of my commerce with the world—there I am a child—there they do not know me not even my most intimate acquaintance—I give into their feelings as though I were refraining from irritating a little child—Some think me middling, others silly, others foolish—every one thinks he sees my weak side against my will, when in truth it is with my will—I am content to be thought all this because I have in my own breast so great a resource. This is one great reason why they like me so; because they can all show to advantage in a room, and eclipse from a certain

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Milton: 'Il Penseroso', ll. 97, 98.

<sup>2</sup> 'Troilus and Cressida', III. ii. 8–10.

tact one who is reckoned to be a good Poet—I hope I am not here playing tricks<sup>1</sup> ‘to make the angels weep’: I think not: for I have not the least contempt for my species; and though it may sound paradoxical: my greatest elevations of Soul leave me every time more humbled—Enough of this—though in your Love for me you will not think it enough.<sup>2</sup> Haslam has been here this morning, and has taken all the Letters except this sheet, which I shall send him by the Twopenny, as he will put the Parcel in the Boston post Bag by the advice of Capper and Hazlewood, who assure him of the safety and expedition that way—the Parcel will be forwarded to Warder and thence to you all the same. There will not be a Philadelphia Ship for these six weeks—by that time I shall have another Letter to you. Mind you I mark this Letter A.<sup>3</sup> By the time you will receive this you will have I trust passed through the greatest of your fatigues. As it was with your Sea sickness I shall not hear of them till they are past. Do not set to your occupation with too great an a(n)xiety—take it calmly—and let your health be the prime consideration. I hope you will have a Son, and it is one of my first wishes to have him in my Arms—which I will do please God before he cuts one double tooth. Tom is rather more easy than he has been: but is still so nervous that I cannot speak to him of these Matters—indeed it is the care I have had to keep his Mind aloof from feelings too acute that has made this Letter so short a one—I did not like to write before him a Letter he knew was to reach your hands—I cannot even now ask him for any Message—his heart speaks to you—Be as happy as you can. Think of me and for my sake be cheerful. Believe me my dear Brother and Sister

Your anxious and affectionate Brother  
John.

This day<sup>4</sup> is my Birth day—

<sup>1</sup> ‘Measure for Measure’, II. ii. 121–2.

<sup>2</sup> It is not clear how many days elapsed between the writing of this sentence and that of the next. It seems likely that Keats wrote to the end of the letter on the day which he considered to be his birthday—whether the 29th or the 31st of October; but he may have written merely the postscript on that occasion.

<sup>3</sup> The next one, No. 98, is marked ‘B’.

<sup>4</sup> According to the baptismal register of St. Botolph’s Church, Bishopsgate, Keats was born on the 31st of October 1795; some of his friends appear to have thought that his birthday was the 29th of October.

All our friends have been anxious in their enquiries and all send their rem(emb)rances

95. To FANNY KEATS. *Thursday 5 Nov. 1818.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | Miss Tuckey's | Walthamstow—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and NO 5 1818.

My dear Fanny,

I have seen Mr Abbey three times about you, and have not been able to get his consent—

He says that once more between this and the Holy-days will be sufficient. What can I do? I should have been at Walthamstow several times, but I am not able to leave Tom for so long a time as that would take me. Poor Tom has been rather better these 4 last days in consequence of obtaining a little rest a nights. Write to me as often as you can, and believe that I would do any thing to give you any pleasure—we must as yet wait patiently.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

96. To JAMES RICE. *Tuesday 24 Nov. 1818.*

*Address:* Mr James Rice | Poland Street—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and NO 25 1818.

Well Walk—Nov<sup>r</sup> 24.

My dear Rice,

Your amende honorable, I must call 'un surcroit d'amitié' for I am not at all sensible of any thing but that you were unfortunately engaged and I was unfortunately in a hurry. I completely understand your feeling in this mistake, and find in it that ballance of comfort which remains after regretting your uneasiness. I have long made up my Mind to take for granted the genuine heartedness of my friends notwithstanding any temporary ambiguousness in their behaviour or their tongues; nothing of which however I had the least scent of this morning. I say completely understand; for I am everlastingly getting my mind into such like painful trammels—and am even at this moment suffering under them in the case of a friend of ours. I will tell you—Two most unfortunate and paral(yl)el slips—it seems downright preintention. A friend<sup>1</sup> says to

<sup>1</sup> I think this friend—the two slips clearly belong to one occasion—was Reynolds. Severn painted an admirable miniature of him.

me 'Keats I shall go and see Severn this Week' 'Ah' says I 'You want him to take your Portrait' and again 'Keats' says a friend 'When will you come to town again' 'I will' says I 'let you have the Mss next week' In both these I appear'd to attribute and (*for an*) interested motive to each of my friends' questions—the first made him flush; the second made him look angry—And yet I am innocent—in both cases my Mind leapt over every interval ~~between~~ to what I saw was per se a pleasant subject with him—You see I have no allowances to make—you see how far I am from supposing you could show me any neglect. I very much regret the long time I have been obliged to exile from you—for I have had one or two rather pleasant occasions to confer upon with you—What I have heard from George is favorable—I expect soon a Letter from the Settlement itself—

Your sincere friend  
John Keats

I cannot give any good news of Tom—

96a. To Mrs. DAVENPORT. *November 1818*

*No address or postmark.*

Mr. Keats's Compliments to Mr<sup>s</sup> Davenport (*sic*) and is sorry to say that his Brother continues in the same state. He and his Brother are extremely sensible of Mr<sup>s</sup> Davenport's Kindness—

97. To FANNY KEATS. *Tuesday 1 Dec. 1818.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | Miss Caley's School | Walthamstow

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and DE 1 1818.

Tuesday Morn

My dear Fanny,

Poor Tom<sup>1</sup> has been so bad that I have delayed your visit hither—as it would be so painful to you both. I

96a. This formal note, obviously written in reply to an inquiry from Mrs. Burridge Davenport of Church Row, Hampstead, is endorsed, in a handwriting I do not recognize, 'Nov 1818 | Ino Keats'. The original is in a Grangerized copy of Moore's 'Poetical Works, Letters and Journals, of Lord Byron', 1844, vol. xxvi, pp. 436–7, in the Library of the British Museum (Press mark C. 44. f). I am indebted to Professor Newman I. White, of Duke University, for drawing my attention to it.

<sup>1</sup> He died on the morning of December 1, and was buried in the church of St. Stephen, Coleman Street, on the 7th of December, 1818.



cannot say he is any better this morning—he is in a very dangerous state—I have scar(c)e any hopes of him. Keep up your spirits for me my dear Fanny—repose entirely in  
Your affectionate Brother  
John.

From RICHARD WOODHOUSE to KEATS.<sup>1</sup> *Thursday 10 Dec. 1818.*

*Address: Jno. Keats Esq<sup>r</sup>. at foot of last page.*

My dear Keats,

I have to thank you for a mark of kind consideration, shewn at a moment when an attention to such matters must have been peculiarly irksome.—Accept this late acknowledgment—Believe me, I deeply sympathised with you, though I could not bring myself to interrupt the sacredness of recent affliction with commonplaces of condolence. Your brother is now, we trust, happier than we have ability to wish him; and it is our duty to turn eyes of gratitude around for the many blessings that yet remain to us.—It will please me to hear that you are well, and are recovering from the shock of your loss.

I send enclosed a letter which, when read, take the trouble to return to me. The history of its reaching me is this.—My cousin, Miss Frogley of Hounslow, borrowed my copy of *Endymion* for a specified time. Before she had time to look into it; her and my friend M<sup>r</sup>. H<sup>y</sup>. Neville of Esher, who was house Surgeon to the late Princess Charlotte, insisted upon having it to read for a day or two, & undertook to make my Cousin's peace with me on account of the extra delay.—Neville told me that one of the Misses Porter (of romance celebrity) had seen it on his table, dipped into it, & expressed a wish to read it. I desired he would keep it as long, and lend it to as many, as he pleased, provided it was not allowed to slumber upon any one's shelf. I learned subsequently from Miss Frogley that those ladies had requested of M<sup>r</sup>. Neville, if he was acquainted with the author, that they might have the pleasure of an Introduction.—About a week back the enclosed was transmitted by M<sup>r</sup>. Neville to my cousin, as a species of apology for keeping her so long without the book. And she sent it to me knowing it would give me pleasure.—I forward it to you, for somewhat the same reason, but principally because it gives me the opportunity of naming to you (which it would have been fruitless to do before) the opening there is for an introduction to a class of society, from which you may possibly derive advantage as well as gratification, if you think proper to avail yourself of it.—In such case I should be very happy to further your wishes—But do just as you please—If you decline the overture, rely upon it no Intimation from me shall ever reach the quarter in question, that the letter enclosed,

<sup>1</sup> Previously printed from Woodhouse's draft in the Pierpont Morgan Library by courtesy of the Director; the above is from the letter sent to Keats, now in Harvard College Library. Keats quotes a portion of it in the following letter to George and Georgiana; see pp. 249–51. For Keats's reply, see Letter 100.

or any thing that has transpired has come to your ear.—The whole is entirely at present “inter nos”.—I go out of town tomorrow for 3 or 4 days,—Do not therefore write to me till after Tuesday next.—Believe me,

my Dear Keats,  
Most sincerely Yours,  
Rich<sup>d</sup>. Woodhouse.  
Temple 10 Dec<sup>r</sup> 1818.

P.S. I believe you are not at Hampstead, I shall therefore beg Taylor to forward you this.

98. To GEORGE AND GEORGINA KEATS. (*Wednesday 16*) Dec. 1818—Monday 4 Jan. 1819.

*No address or postmark.*

B

My dear Brother and Sister,

You will have been prepared, before this reaches you for the worst news you could have, nay if Haslam's letter arrives in proper time, I have a consolation in thinking the first shock will be past before you receive this. The last days of poor Tom were of the most distressing nature; but his last moments were not so painful, and his very last was without a pang. I will not enter into any parsonic comments on death—yet the common observations of the commonest people on death are as true as their proverbs. I have scarce a doubt of immortality of some nature of (*for or*) other—neither had Tom.<sup>1</sup> My friends have been exceedingly kind to me every one of them—Brown detained me at his House. I suppose no one could have had their time made smoother than mine has been. During poor Tom's illness I was not able to write and since his death the task of beginning has been a hindrance to me. Within this last Week I have been every where—and I will tell you as nearly as possible how all go on. With Dilke and Brown I am quite thick—with Brown indeed I am going to domesticate—that is we shall keep house together—I shall have the front parlour and he the back one—by which I shall avoid the *noise* of Bentley's Children—and be the better able to go on with my Studies—which (*h*)ave been greatly interrupted lately, so that I have not the Shadow of an idea of a book in my head, and my pen

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 223, p. 501. Cowden Clarke, in ‘Recollections of Writers’ (1878), p. 157 says ‘A passage in one of Keats's letters to me evidences that he had a “firm belief in the immortality of the soul”, and, as he adds, “so had Tom”, whose eyes he had just closed.’

seems to have grown too goutty for verse. How are you going on now? The going on of the world make(s) me dizzy—there you are with Birkbeck—here I am with brown—sometimes I fancy an immense separation, and sometimes, as at present, a direct communication of Spirit with you. That will be one of the grandeurs of immortality—there will be no space and consequently the only commerce between spirits will be by their intelligence of each other—when they will completely understand each other—while we in this world merely comp(r)ehend each other in different degrees—the higher the degree of good so higher is our Love and friendship. I have been so little used to writing lately that I am affraid you will not smoke my meaning so I will give an example—Suppose Brown or Haslam or any one whom I understand in the nether degree to what I do you, were in America, they would be so much the farther from me in proportion as their identity was less impressed upon me. Now the reason why I do not feel at the present moment so far from you is that I remember your Ways and Manners and actions; I know you(r) manner of thinking, your manner of feeling: I know what shape your joy or your sorrow would take; I know the manner of you walking, standing, sauntering, sitting down, laughing, punning, and every action so truly that you seem near to me. You will remember me in the same manner—and the more when I tell you that I shall read a passage of Shakspeare every Sunday at ten oClock—you read one at the same time and we shall be as near each other as blind bodies can be in the same room. I saw your Mother the day before yesterday, and intend now frequently to pass half a day with her—she sceem'd tolerably well. I called in Henrietta Street and so was speaking with you(r) Mother about Miss Millar—we had a chat about Heiresses—she told me I think of 7 or eight dying Swains. Charles was not at home. I think I have heard a little more talk about Miss Keasle—all I know of her is she had a new sort of shoe on of bright leather like our Knapsacks—Miss Millar gave me one of her confounded pinches. N. B. did not like it. M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke went with me to see Fanny last week, and Haslam went with me last Sunday—she was well—she gets a little plumper and had a little Colour. On Sunday<sup>1</sup> I brought from her a present of

<sup>1</sup> The 13th of December.

facescreens and a work bag for Mr<sup>s</sup> D. they were<sup>1</sup> very pretty—From walthamstow we walked to Bethnal green—w(h)ere I felt so tired from my long walk that I was obliged to go to Bed at ten<sup>2</sup>—Mr and Mr<sup>s</sup> Keasle were there. Haslam has been excessively Kind—and his anxiety about you is great; I never meet him but we have some chat thereon. He is always doing me some good turn—he gave me this thin paper for the purpose of writing to you. I have been passing an hour this morning with Mr Lewis<sup>3</sup>—he wants news of you very much. Haydon was here yesterday—he amused us much by speaking of young Hopner<sup>4</sup> who went with Capt<sup>n</sup> Ross<sup>5</sup> on a voyage of discovery to the Poles—The Ship was sometimes entirely surrounded with vast mountains and crags of ice and in a few Minutes not a particle was to be seen all round the Horizon. Once they met with with so vast a Mass that th(e)y gave themselves over for lost; their last recourse was in meeting it with the Bowsp(r)it, which they did, and split it asunder and glided through it as it parted for a great distance—one Mile and more. Their eyes were so fatigued with the eternal dazzle and whiteness that they lay down on their backs upon deck to relieve their sight on the blue sky. Hopner describes his dreadful we(a)riness at the continual day—the Sun ever moving in a circle round above their heads—so pressing upon him that he could not rid himself of the sensation even in the dark Hold of the Ship—The Esquimaux are described as the most wretched of Beings—they float from the Summer to their winter residences and back again like white Bears on the ice floats—They seem never to have washed, and so when their features move, the red skin shows beneath the cracking peal of dirt. They had no notion of any inhabitants in the World but themselves. The sailors who had not seen a Star for some time, when they came again southwards, on the hailing of the first revision of one all ran upon deck with feelings of the most joyful nature. Haydon's eyes will not suffer him to proceed with his Picture—his Physician tells

<sup>1</sup> A word is missing here owing to a mend in the holograph. Colvin and H.B.F. print 'really', for which there is barely room. The Rev. M. R. Ridley suggests 'both' which seems to me the likelier word.

<sup>2</sup> At Haslam's in Virginia Row, Bethnal Green.

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 94, note, p. 236.

<sup>4</sup> Lieut. H. P. Hoppner (1795–1833).

<sup>5</sup> Sir John Ross (1777–1856).

him he must remain two months more, inactive. Hunt keeps on in his old way—I am completely tired of it all—He has lately publish'd a Pocket-Book call'd the litterary Pocket-Book—full of the most sickening stuff you can imagine. Reynolds is well—he has become an edinburgh Reviewer—I have not heard from Bailey. Rice I have seen very little of lately—and I am very sorry for it. The Miss R's<sup>1</sup> are all as usual—Archer<sup>2</sup> above all people called on me one day—he wanted some information by my means, from Hunt and Haydon, concerning some Man they knew. I got him what he wanted, but know none of the whys and wherefores. Poor Kirkman left wentworth place one evening about half past eight and was stopped, beaten and robbed of his Watch in Pond Street. I saw him a few days since, he had not recovered from his bruize. I called on Hazlitt the day I went to Romney Street—I gave John Hunt extracts from your Letters—he has taken no notice. I have seen Lamb lately—Brown and I were taken by Hunt to Novello's—there we were devastated and excruciated with bad and repeated puns—Brown dont want to go again. We went the other evening to see Brutus a new Trageday by Howard Payne,<sup>3</sup> an American—Kean was excellent—the play was very bad. It is the first time I have been since I went with you to the Lyceum.

Mr<sup>s</sup> Brawne who took Brown's house for the Summer, still resides in Hampstead—she is ~~her~~ a very nice woman—and her daughter senior is I think beautiful and elegant, graceful, silly, fashionable and strange we have a little tiff now and then—and she behaves a little better, or I must have sheered off—I find by a sidelong report from your Mother that I am to be invited to Miss Millar's birthday dance—Shall I dance with Miss Waldegrave? Eh! I shall be obliged to shirk a good many there—I shall be the only Dandy there—and indeed I merely comply with the invitation that the party may no(t) be entirely destitute of a specimen of that Race. I shall appear in a complete

<sup>1</sup> The Misses Reynolds.

<sup>2</sup> Archibald Archer, portrait painter, exhibited at the Royal Academy 1810–45. His picture of the temporary Elgin room at the British Museum in 1819 includes portraits of Haydon, Benjamin West, Joseph Planta, and himself.

<sup>3</sup> John Howard Payne (1792–1852), dramatist; wrote 'Home, Sweet Home'.

dress of purple Hat and all—with a list of the beauties I have conquered embroidered round my Calves—

*Thursday*<sup>1</sup> This morning is so very fine, I should have walked over to Walthamstow if I had thought of it yesterday—What are you doing this morning? Have you a clear hard frost as we have? How do you come on with the gun? Have you shot a Buffalo? Have you met with any Pheasants? My Thoughts are very frequently in a foreign Country—I live more out of England than in it—The Mountains of Tartary are a favourite lounge, if I happen to miss the Allegany ridge, or have no whim for Savoy. There must be great pleasure in pursuing game—pointing your gun—no, it wont do—now no—rabbit it—now bang—smoke and feathers—where is it? Shall you be able to get a good pointer or so? Have you seen Mr Trimmer—He is an acquaintance of Peachey's. Now I am not addressing myself to G. minor,<sup>2</sup> and yet I am—for you are one—Have you some warm furs? By your next Letters I shall expect to hear exactly how you go on—smother nothing—let us have all—fair and foul—all plain. Will the little bairn have made his entrance before you have this? Kiss it for me, and when it can first know a cheese from a Caterpillar show it my picture twice a Week—You will be glad to hear that Gifford's attack upon me has done me service—it has got my Book among several *Sets*—Nor must I forget to mention once more, what I suppose Haslam has told you, the present of a £25 note I had anonymously sent me—I have many things to tell you—the best way will be to make coppies of my correspondence; and I must not forget the Sonnet I received with the Note—Last Week I received the following from Woodhouse, whom you must recollect—"My dear Keats,—I send enclosed a Letter which, when read take the trouble to return to me. The History of its reaching me is this. My Cousin, Miss Frogley<sup>3</sup> of Hounslow borrowed my copy of

<sup>1</sup> Thursday, the 17th of December, see note on p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> 'G minor' would of course be his sister-in-law, Georgiana, whom he sometimes called 'little George'.

<sup>3</sup> William Howitt wrote from Esher on the 25th of February, 1838, to his brother Richard: 'Do you know that the wife of our surgeon here, Mrs. Neville, is an old friend of John Keats? I believe I might say an old flame. Many of his verses were addressed to her; and a very lovely young woman she was, I doubt not. She sent us the other day three sketches of him to look at—one of them in youth and health; one lying in his berth reading while passing through the Bay of Biscay on his way to Italy, and

Endymion for a specified time. Before she had time to look into it; she and my friend M<sup>r</sup> H<sup>y</sup> Neville of Esher, who was house Surgeon to the late Princess Charlotte, insisted upon having it to read for a day or two, and undertook to make my Cousin's peace with me on account of the extra delay—Neville told me that one of the Misses Porter<sup>1</sup> (of romance Celebrity) had seen it on his table, dipped into it, and expressed a wish to read it—I desired he would keep it as long, and lend it to as many, as he pleased, provided it was not allowed to slumber on any one's shelf. I learned subsequently from Miss Frogley that these Ladies had requested of M<sup>r</sup> Neville, if he was acquainted with the Author the Pleasure of an introduction—About a week back the enclosed was transmitted by M<sup>r</sup> Neville to my Cousin, as a species of Apology for keeping her so long without the Book—And she sent it to me, knowing it would give me Pleasure—I forward it to you for somewhat the same reason, but principally because it gives me the opportunity of naming to you (which It would have been fruitless to do before) the opening there is for an introduction to a class of society, from which you may possibly derive advantage as well as gratification, if you think proper to avail yourself of it. In such case I should be very happy to further your Wishes. But do just as you please. The whole is entirely *entre nous*—Your's &c.—R.W." Well—now this is Miss Porter's<sup>2</sup> Letter to Neville—“Dear Sir, as my Mother is sending a Messenger to Esher, I cannot but make the same the bearer of my

one as he lay with his head on the pillow just before death. They were done by Mr. Severn.’—‘Mary Howitt, *An Autobiography*’ (1889), i. 276–7. William Henry Neville, of Esher, married ‘Mary, daughter of the late H. Frogley, Esq. of Hounslow’ on the 6th of March 1820, and died at Esher on April 30, 1857, aged 68.

<sup>1</sup> Anna Maria Porter (1780–1832), author of ‘*The Hungarian Brothers*’, &c. Jane Porter (1776–1850), author of ‘*The Scottish Chiefs*’, &c.

<sup>2</sup> It was Jane who wrote the letter, which is dated ‘Ditton Cottage. Dec<sup>r</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> 1818’. Keats copied it fairly accurately as far as he went. Here is the rest of it from the original, now in the Keats Museum, Hampstead:—

‘to the possessor, it always burns its brilliant way thro’ every obstacle.—Had Chatterton possessed sufficient manliness of mind to know the magnanimity of Patience; and been aware that great talents have a Commission from Heaven he would not have deserted his post; and his name might now have posed with Milton.—Ever much yours

Jane Porter.—

Should <you> be passing this way, tomorrow, or Sunday, my Mother & I are at home.—

To H. Neville Esq<sup>r</sup>.’

regrets for not having had the pleasure of seeing you, the morning you called at the gate—I had given orders to be denied: I was so very unwell with my still adhæsiue cold; but had I known it was you I should have taken off the interdict for a few minutes, to say, how very much I am delighted with *Endymion*—I had just finished the Poem, and have done as you permitted lent it to Miss Fitzgerald. I regret you are not personally acquainted with the Author: for I should have been happy to have acknowledged to him, through the advantage of your Communication the very rare delight my Sister and myself have enjoyed from this first fruits of Genius. I hope the ill-natured Review will not have damaged (or damped)<sup>1</sup> such true Parnassian fire—it ought not for when Life is granted &c.” and so she goes on—Now I feel more obliged than flattered by this—so obliged that I will not at present give you an extravaganza of a Lady Romancer. I will be introduced to them if it be merely for the pleasure of writing to you about it—I shall certainly see a new race of People—I shall more certainly have no time for them—Hunt has asked me to meet Tom Moore some day—so you shall hear of him. The night we went to Novello’s there was a complete set too of Mozart and punning—I was so completely tired of it that if I were to follow my own inclinations I should never meet any one of that set again, not even Hunt—who is certainly a pleasant fellow in the main when you are with him—but in reallity he is vain, egotistical, and disgusting in matters of taste and in morals. He understands many a beautiful thing; but then, instead of giving other minds credit for the same degree of perception as he himself possesses—he begins an explanation in such a curious manner that our taste and self-love is offended continually. Hunt does one harm by making fine things petty and beautiful things hateful—Through him I am indifferent to Mozart, I care not for white Busts—and many a glorious thing when associated with him becomes a nothing—This distorts one’s mind—make(s) one’s thoughts bizarre—perplexes one in the standard of Beauty. Martin<sup>2</sup> is very much irritated against Blackwood for printing some Letters in his Magazine which were

<sup>1</sup> Keats wrote both words as in the text, being, it would seem, uncertain which the lady meant. Miss Porter wrote ‘damped’.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 47 *ante*.



Martin's property—he always found excuses for Blackwood till he himself was injured and now he is enraged. I have been several times thinking whether or not I should send you the examiners as Birkbeck no doubt has all the good periodical Publications—I will save them at all events. I must not forget to mention how attentive and useful M<sup>rs</sup> Bentley has been—I am sorry to leave her—but I must, and I hope she will not be much a looser by it—Bentley is very well—he has just brought me a cloathe's basket of Books. Brown has gone to town to day to take his Nephews who are on a visit her(e) to see the Lions. I am passing a Quiet day—which I have not done a long while—and if I do continue so—I feel I must again begin with my poetry—for if I am not in action mind or Body I am in pain—and from that I suffer greatly by going into parties where from the rules of society and a natural pride I am obliged to smother my Spirit and look like an Idiot—because I feel my impulses given way to would too much amaze them—I live under an everlasting restraint—never relieved except when I am composing—so I will write away.

Friday.<sup>1</sup> I think you knew before you left England that my next subject would be 'the fall of Hyperion' I went on a little with it last night—but it will take some time to get into the vein again. I will not give you any extracts because I wish the whole to make an impression—I have however a few Poems which you will like and I will copy out on the next sheet. I shall dine with Haydon on Sunday and go over to Walthamstow on Monday if the frost hold.<sup>1</sup> I think also of going into Hampshire this Christmas to M<sup>r</sup> Snooks—they say I shall be very much amused—But I dont know—I think I am in too huge a Mind for study—I must do it—I must wait at home, and let those who wish come to see me. I cannot always be (how do you spell it?) tramping—Here I must tell you that I have not been able to keep the journal or write the Tale I promised—now I shall be able to do so. I will write to Haslam this morning to know when the Packet sails and till it does I will write something every day—after that my journal shall go on like clockwork—and you must not complain of its dullness—for what I wish is to write a quantity to you—

<sup>1</sup> Friday, the 18th of December, on which day he wrote to Fanny of his intention to visit her on the following Monday; see Letter 99.

knowing well that dullness itself will from me be interesting to you. You may conceive how this not having been done has weighed upon me—I shall be able to judge from your next what sort of information will be of most service or amusement to you. Perhaps as you were fond of giving me sketches of character you may like a little pic nic of scandal even across the Atlantic—But now I must speak particularly to you my dear Sister—for I know you love a little quizzing, better than a great bit of apple dumpling. Do you know Uncle Red(h)all? He is a little Man with an innocent, powdered, upright head; he lisps with a protruded under lip—he has two Neices each one would weigh three of him—one for height and the other for breadth—he knew Barttolozzi—he gave a supper and ranged his bottles of wine all up the Kitchen and cellar stairs—quite ignorant of what might be drank<sup>1</sup>—it might have been a good joke to pour on the sly bottle after bottle into a washing tub and roar for more. If you were to trip him up it would discompose a Pigtail and bring his under lip nearer to his nose. He never had the good luck to loose a silk Handkerch(i)ef in a Crowd and therefore has only one topic of conversation—Bartolotzzi—Shall I give you Miss Brawn(e)? She is about my height—with a fine style of countenance of the lengthen'd sort—she wants sentiment in every feature—she manages to make her hair look well—her nostrills are fine—though a little painful—he(r) mouth is bad and good—he(r) Profil is better than her full-face which indeed is not full but pale and thin without showing any bone—Her shape is very graceful and so are her movements—her Arms are good her hands badish—her feet tolerable—she is not seventeen<sup>2</sup>—but she is ignorant—monstrous in her behaviour flying out in all directions, calling people such names—that I was forced lately to make use of the term *Minx*—this is I think no(t) from any innate vice but from a penchant she has for acting stylishly. I am however tired of such style and shall decline any more of it. She had a friend<sup>3</sup> to visit her lately—you have known plenty such—Her face is raw as if she was standing out in a frost—her lips raw and seem always

<sup>1</sup> Keats had told his brothers this in Letter 34 (5 Jan. 1818), p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Brawne was eighteen on 9 August, 1818.

<sup>3</sup> Miss Caroline Robinson, married James Ellis and became the mother of Robinson Ellis in 1834.

ready for a Pullet—she plays the Music<sup>1</sup> without one sensation but the feel of the ivory at her fingers—she is a downright Miss without one set off—we hated her and smoked her and baited her, and I think drove her away—Miss B—thinks her a Paragon of fashion, and says she is the only woman she would change persons with—What a Stupe—She is superior as a Rose to a Dandelion—When we went to bed Brown observed as he put out the Taper what an ugly old woman that Miss Robinson would make—at which I must have groan'd aloud for I'm sure ten minutes. I have not seen the thing Kingston<sup>2</sup> again—George will describe him to you—I shall insinuate some of these Creatures into a Comedy some day—and perhaps have Hunt among them—Scene, a little Parlour—Enter Hunt—Gattie<sup>3</sup>—Hazlitt—M<sup>rs</sup> Novello—Ollier—Gattie) Ha! Hunt! got into you⟨r⟩ new house? Ha! M<sup>rs</sup> Novello seen Altam and his Wife?<sup>4</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> N. Yes (with a grin) its M<sup>r</sup> Hunts is'nt it? Gattie. Hunt's no ha! M<sup>r</sup> Olier I congratulate you upon the highest compliment I ever heard paid to the Book. M<sup>r</sup> Haslit, I hope you are well. (Hazlitt.—yes Sir, no Sir—M<sup>r</sup> Hunt (at the Music) La Biondina &c M<sup>r</sup> Hazlitt did you ever hear this—La Biondina &c. Hazlitt—O no Sir—I never—Olier—Do Hunt give it us over again—divino—Gattie / divino—Hunt when does your Pocket Book come out— / Hunt / What is this abso⟨r⟩bs me quite? O we are spinning on a little, we shall floridize soon I hope—Such a thing was very much wanting—people think of nothing but money-getting—now for me I am rather inclined to the liberal side of things—⟨torn⟩ I am reckoned lax in my christian principles—&c &c &c

It is some days since I wrote the last page—and what have I been about since I have no Idea—I dined at Has-

<sup>1</sup> The expression 'the music' for 'the piano-forte' was probably current in the middle class in Keats's day. He uses it in the 1817 volume of poems in the Epistle to Cowden Clarke, l. 113. See also lower down in the text, 'M<sup>r</sup> Hunt (at the Music)'.

<sup>2</sup> The Commissioner of Stamps mentioned more than once before—the man insulted by Lamb (when tipsy) at Haydon's 'immortal dinner party'. See Letter 34, pp. 74-5.

<sup>3</sup> John Byng Gattie (1788-1828) of the Treasury. Keats inscribed a copy of 'Poems', 1817, to him,—'My dear Giovanni I hope your eyes will soon be well enough to read this with Pleasure and ease', and Leigh Hunt printed a sonnet 'To Henry Robertson, John Gattie, and Vincent Novello' in his 'Foliage', 1818. Edmund Ollier married Miss Maria Gattie.

<sup>4</sup> 'Altham and his Wife: a Domestic Tale.' By Charles Ollier, 1818.

lam's on sunday—with Haydon yesterday and saw Fanny in the morning—she was well—Just now I took out my poem to go on with it—but the thought of my writing so little to you came upon me and I could not get on—so I have began at random—and I have not a word to say—and yet my thoughts are so full of you that I can do nothing else. I shall be confined at Hampstead a few days on account of a sore throat—the first thing I do will be to visit your Mother again. The last time I saw Henry he show'd me his first engraving which I thought capital—Mr Lewis<sup>1</sup> called this morning and brought some american Papers. I have not look'd into them—I think we ought to have heard of you before this—I am in daily expectation of Letters—Nil desperandum—Mrs Abbey wishes to take Fanny from School—I shall strive all I can against that—There has happened great Misfortune in the Drewe Family<sup>2</sup>—old Drewe has been dead some time; and lately George Drewe expired in a fit—on which account Reynolds has gone into Devonshire. He dined a few days since at Horace Twisse's<sup>3</sup> with Liston<sup>4</sup> and Charles Kemble<sup>5</sup>—I see very little of him now, as I seldom go to little Britain because the Ennui always seizes me there, and John Reynolds is very dull at home. Nor have I seen Rice—How you are now going on is a Mystery to me—I hope a few days will clear it up. I never know the day of the Month—It is very fine here to-day though I expect a Thunder-cloud or rather a snow cloud in less than an hour. I am at present alone at Wentworth place—Brown being at Chichester and Mr & Mrs Dilke making a little stay in Town. I know not what I should do without a Sunshiny morning now and then—it clears up one's spirits. Dilke and I frequently have some chat about you. I have now and then some doubts but he seems to have a great confidence—I think there will soon be perceptible a chance (*for change*) in the fashionable slang literature of the day—it seems to me that Reviews have had their day—that the public have been surfeited—there will soon be some new folly to keep the Parlours in talk—What it is I care not—We have seen three literary Kings in our

<sup>1</sup> See Letter 94, note, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Reynolds married Eliza Powell Drewe, 31 August, 1822.

<sup>3</sup> Horace Twiss (1787–1849), wit and politician.

<sup>4</sup> John Liston (1776?–1846).

<sup>5</sup> Charles Kemble (1775–1854).

Time—Scott—Byron—and then the scotch novels.<sup>1</sup> All now appears to be dead—or I may mistake—literary Bodies may still keep up the Bustle which I do not hear. Haydon show'd me a letter he had received from Tripoli—Ritchey<sup>2</sup> was well and in good Spirits, among Camels, Turbans, Palm Trees and Sands—You may remember I promised to send him an Endymion which I did not—however he has one—you have one—One is in the Wilds of america—the other is on a Camel's back in the plains of Egypt. I am looking into a Book of Dubois's<sup>3</sup>—he has written directions to the Players—one of them is very good. "In singing never mind the music—observe what time you please. It would be a pretty degradation indeed if you were obliged to confine your genius to the dull regularity of a fiddler—horse hair and cat's guts—no, let him keep *your* time and play *your* tune—*dodge him*." I will now copy out the Letter and Sonnet I have spoken of. The outside cover was thus directed 'Mess<sup>rs</sup> Taylor and Hessey (Booksellers) No 93 Fleet Street, London' and it contained this 'Mess<sup>rs</sup> Taylor and Hessey are requested to forward the enclosed letter by some *safe* mode of conveyance to the Author of Endymion, who is not known at Teignmouth: or if they have not his address, they will return the letter by post, directed as below within a *fortnight* "Mr P. Fenbank P. O Teignmouth" 9<sup>th</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> 1818—In this sheet was enclosed the following—with a superscription 'Mr John Keats Teignmouth'—Then came Sonnet to John Keats—which I would not copy for any in the world but you—who know that I scout "mild light and loveliness" or any such nonsense in myself—

Star of high promise!—not to this dark age  
 Do thy mild light and loveliness belong;—  
 For it is blind intolerant and wrong;  
 Dead to empyreal soarings, and the rage  
 Of scoffing spirits bitter war doth wage

<sup>1</sup> The wording of this sentence suggests that Keats had not fathomed Sir Walter Scott's secret, but see Letter 34, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Ritchie, see Letter 34, p. 74, and note. The letter referred to above was dated from Tripoli, Oct. 30, 1818; it reached England on Dec. 22. 'Pray tell Keats that Endymion has arrived thus far on his way to the Desert, and when you are sitting over your Christmas fire will be jogging (in all probability) on a Camel's back "over those Afran Sands immeasurable".'

<sup>3</sup> 'My Pocket Book', 1808, p. 222. See Letter 32, p. 70, and note.

With all that hold integrity of song.  
 Yet thy clear beam shall shine through ages strong  
 To ripest times a light—and heritage.  
 And there breathe now who dote upon thy fame,  
 Whom thy wild numbers wrap beyond their being,  
 Who love the freedom of thy Lays—their aim  
 Above the scope of a dull tribe unseeing—  
 And there is one whose hand will never scant  
 From his poor store of fruits all *thou* canst want.<sup>1</sup>  
turn over

November, 1818.

I turn'd over and found a <sup>£</sup>25-note—Now this appears to me all very proper—if I had refused it—I should have behaved in a very bragadochio dunderheaded manner—and yet the present galls me a little—and I do not know whether I shall not return it if I ever meet with the donor—after whom to no purpose I have written—I have your Miniature on the Table George the great—it's very like—though not quite about the upper lip—I wish we had a better of you little George—I must not forget to tell you that a few days since I went with Dilke a shooting on the heath and stot *<for shot>* a Tomtit—There were as many guns abroad as Birds. I intended to have been at Chichester this Wednesday—but on account of this sore throat I wrote him (Brown) my excuse yesterday—

Thursday / I will date when I finish—I received a Note from Haslam yesterday—asking if my letter is ready—now this is only the second sheet—notwithstanding all my promises—But you must reflect what hindrances I have had. However on sealing this I shall have nothing to prevent my proceeding in a gradual journal—which will increase in a Month to a considerable size. I will insert any little pieces I may write—though I will not give any extracts from my large poem<sup>2</sup> which is scarce began. I what *<for want>* to hear very much whether Poetry and literature in general has gained or lost interest with you—and what sort of writing is of the highest gust with you now.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Blunden, on very good grounds, has suggested the probability of Woodhouse being 'Mr. P. Fenbank', a name I have failed to trace at Teignmouth: see the end of Woodhouse's letter to Keats dated the 16th of September 1820, p. 520.

<sup>2</sup> 'Hyperion.' See p. 252 *ante*.

With what sensation do you read Fielding?—and do not Hogarth's pictures seem an old thing to you? Yet you are very little more removed from general association than I am—recollect that no Man can live but in one society at a time—his enjoyment in the different states of human society must depend upon the Powers of his Mind—that is you can imagine a roman triumph, or an olympic game as well as I can. We with our bodily eyes see but the fashion and Manners of one country for one age—and then we die. Now to me manners and customs long since passed whether among the Babylonians or the Bactrians are as real, or even more real than those among which I now live—My thoughts have turned lately this way—The more we know the more inadequacy we discover in the world to satisfy us—this is an old observation; but I have made up my Mind never to take any thing for granted—but even to examine the truth of the commonest proverbs—This however is true—M<sup>rs</sup> Tighe<sup>1</sup> and Beattie<sup>2</sup> once delighted me—now I see through them and can find nothing in them—or weakness—and yet how many they still delight! Perhaps a superior being may look upon Shakspeare in the same light—is it possible? No—This same inadequacy is discovered (forgive me little George you know I don't mean to put you in the mess) in Women with few exceptions—the Dress Maker, the blue Stocking and the most charming sentimentalist differ but in a Slight degree, and are equally smokeable—But I'll go no further—I may be speaking sacrilegiously—and on my word I have thought so little that I have not one opinion upon any thing except in matters of taste—I never can feel certain of any truth but from a clear perception of its Beauty—and I find myself very young minded even in that perceptive power—which I hope will encrease—A year ago I could not understand in the slightest degree Raphael's cartoons—now I begin to read them a little—and how did I learn to do so? By seeing something done in quite an opposite spirit—I mean a picture of Guido's in which all the Saints, instead of that heroic simplicity and unaffected grandeur which they inherit from Raphael, had each of them both in countenance and gesture all the canting, solemn melodramatic mawkishness of

<sup>1</sup> Mary Tighe (1772–1810), author of 'Psyche', 1805.

<sup>2</sup> James Beattie (1735–1803).

MacKenzie's<sup>1</sup> father Nicholas. When I was last at Haydon's I look(ed) over a Book of Prints taken from the fresco of the Church at Milan the name of which I forget—in it are comprised Specimens of the first and second age of art in Italy—I do not think I ever had a greater treat out of Shakspeare—Full of Romance and the most tender feeling—magnificence of draperies beyond any I ever saw not excepting Raphael's. But Grotesque to a curious pitch—yet still making up a fine whole—even finer to me than more accomplish'd works—as there was left so much room for Imagination. I have not heard one of this last course of Hazlitt's lectures—They were upon 'Wit and Humour, the english comic writers'. Saturday Jan<sup>y</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Yesterday Mr (and) M<sup>rs</sup> D and myself dined at M<sup>rs</sup> Brawn'es—nothing particular passed. I never intend hereafter to spend any time with Ladies unless they are handsome—you lose time to no purpose. For that reason I shall beg leave to decline going again to Redall's or Butlers or any Squad where a fine feature cannot be mustered among them all—and where all the evening's amusement consists in saying your good health *your* good health, and *YOUR* good health—and (O I beg your pardon) *your's* Miss—and such thing(s) not even dull enough to keep one awake—with respect to amiable speaking I can read—let my eyes be fed or I'll never go out to dinner any where. Perhaps you may have heard of the dinner given to Tho<sup>s</sup> Moore in Dublin, because I have the account here by me in the Philadelphia democratic paper.<sup>2</sup> The most pleasant thing that accured was the speech Mr Tom made on his Farther's health being drank. I am affraid a great part of my Letters are filled up with promises and what I will do rather than any great deal written—but here I say once for all—that circumstances prevented me from keeping my promise in my last, but now I affirm that as there will be nothing to hinder me I will keep a journal for you. That I have not yet done so you would forgive if you knew how many hours I have been repenting of my neglect. For

<sup>1</sup> Henry Mackenzie (1745–1831): 'The Story of Father Nicholas' in 'Papers from the Lounger', Collected Works, vol. vi: Edinburgh, 1808.

<sup>2</sup> He might have read a full account of the dinner in 'The Freeman's Journal' for the 9th and 10th of June 1818, from which the Philadelphia paper probably took it. Moore said that he owed his success to the education his father had given him and to 'an admirable mother—one of the warmest hearts even this land of warm hearts ever produced'.



I have no thought pervading me so constantly and frequently as that of you—my Poem cannot frequently drive it away—you will retard it much more than *(for than)* you could by taking up my time if you were in England. I never forget you except after seeing now and then some beautiful woman—but that is a fever—the thought of you both is a passion with me but for the most part a calm one. I asked Dilke for a few lines for you—he has promised them—I shall send what I have written to Haslam on Monday Morning<sup>1</sup>—what I can get into another sheet to-morrow I will—there are one or two little poems you might like—I have given up snuff very nearly quite—Dilke has promised to sit with me this evening, I wish he would come this minute for I want a pinch of snuff very much just now—I have none though in my own snuff box—My sore throat is much better to day—I think I might venture on a crust. Here are the Poems—they will explain themselves—as all poems should do without any comment.

Ever let the Fancy roam,  
 Pleasure never is at home.  
 At a touch sweet pleasure melteth  
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth:  
 Then let winged fancy wander  
 To wards heaven still spread beyond her—  
 Open wide the mind's cage door  
 She'll dart forth and cloudward soar.  
 O sweet Fancy, let her loose!  
 Summer's joys are spoilt by use,  
 And the enjoying of the spring  
 Fades as doth its blossoming:  
 Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too  
 Blushing through the mist and dew  
 Cloys with kissing. What do then?  
 Sit thee in an ingle when  
 The sear faggot blazes bright,  
 Spirit of a winter night;  
 When the soundless earth is muffled,  
 And the caked snow is shuffled  
 From the Ploughboy's heavy shoon:  
 When the night doth meet the noon  
 In a dark conspiracy

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the 4th of January 1819.

To banish vesper from the sky.  
Sit thee then and send abroad  
With a Mind self overaw'd  
Fancy high commission'd; send her,—  
She'll have vassals to attend her—  
She will bring thee, spite of frost,  
Beauties that the Earth has lost;  
She will bring thee all together  
All delights of summer weather,  
All the ~~faery~~ buds of May  
On spring turf or scented spray;  
All the heaped Autumn's wealth  
With a still mysterious stealth;  
She will mix these pleasures up  
Like three fit wines in a cup  
And thou shalt quaff it—Thou shalt hear  
Distant harvest carols clear,  
Rustle of the reaped corn  
Sweet Birds antheming the Morn;  
And in the same moment hark  
To the early April lark,  
And the rooks with busy caw  
Foraging for sticks and straw.  
Thou shalt at one glance behold  
The daisy and the marigold;  
White plumed lillies and the first  
Hedgerow primrose that hath burst;  
Shaded Hyacinth alway  
Sapphire Queen of the Mid-may;—  
And every leaf and every flower  
Pearled with the same soft shower.  
Thou shalt see the fieldmouse creep  
Meagre from its celled sleep,  
And the snake all winter shrank  
Cast its skin on sunny bank;  
Freckled nest eggs shalt thou see  
Hatching in the hawthorn tree;  
When the hen bird's wing doth rest  
Quiet on its mossy nest—  
Then the hurry and alarm  
When the Beehive casts its swa⟨r⟩m—  
Acorns ripe down pattering  
While the autumn breezes sing,

For the same sleek throated mouse  
 To store up in its winter house.  
 O sweet Fancy, let her loose!  
 Every joy is spoilt by use,  
 Every pleasure, every joy—  
 Not a Mistress but doth cloy.  
 Where's the cheek that doth not fade  
 Too much gaz'd at? Where's the Maid  
 Whose lip mature is ever new?  
 Where's the eye however blue  
 Doth not weary? Where's the face  
 One would meet in every place?  
 Where's the voice however soft  
 One would hear too oft and oft?  
 At a touch sweet pleasure melteth  
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.  
 Let then winged fancy find  
 Thee a Mistress to thy mind.  
 Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter  
 Ere the God of torment taught her  
 How to frown and how to chide;  
 With a waist and with a side  
 White as Hebe's when her Zone  
 Slipp'd its golden clasp and down  
 Fell her Kirtle to her feet  
 While she held the goblet sweet,  
 And Jove grew languid. Mistress fair,  
 Thou shalt have that tressed hair  
 Adonis tangled all for spite,  
 And the mouth he would not kiss,  
 And the treasure he would miss,  
 And the hand he would not press,  
 And the warmth he would distress,  
 O the Ravishment—the Bliss!  
 Fancy has her there she is—  
 Never fulsome, ever new,  
 There she steps! and tell me who  
 Has a Mistress to *<for so>* divine?  
 Be the palate ne'er so fine  
 She cannot sicken.

Break the Mess *<for Mesh>*  
 Of the Fancy's silken leash  
 Where she's tether'd to the heart—

Quickly break her prison string  
 And such joys as these she'll bring  
 Let the winged fancy roam  
 Pleasure never is at home.

I did not think this had been so long a Poem—I have another not so long—but as it will more conveniently be copied on the other side I will just put down here some observations on Caleb Williams by Hazlitt—I meant to say S<sup>t</sup> Leon for although he has mentioned all the Novels of Godwin very finely I do not quote them, but this only on account of its being a specimen of his usual abrupt manner, and fiery laconicism—He says of S<sup>t</sup> Leon ‘He is a limb torn off from Society. In possession of eternal youth and beauty he can feel no love; surrounded, tantalized and tormented with riches, he can do no good. The faces of Men pass before him as in a speculum; but he is attached to them by no common tie of sympathy or suffering. He is thrown back into himself and his own thoughts. He lives in the solitude of his own breast,—without wife or child or friend or Enemy in the world. *His is the solitude of the Soul, not of woods, or trees or mountains—* but the desert of society—the waste and oblivion of the heart. He is himself alone. His existence is purely intellectual, and is therefore intolerable to one who has felt the rapture of affection, or the anguish of woe.’<sup>1</sup> As I am about it I might as well give you his c(h)aracter of Godwin as a Romancer “Whoever else is, it is pretty clear that the author of Caleb Williams is not the Author of waverly. Nothing can be more distinct or excellent in their several ways than these two writers. If the one owes almost every thing to external observation and traditional character, the other owes every thing to internal conception and contemplation of the possible workings of the human Mind. There is little knowledge of the world, little variety, neither an eye for the picturesque nor a talent for the humourous in Caleb Williams, for instance, but you can not doubt for a moment of the originality of the work and the force of the conception. The impression made upon the reader is the exact measure of the strength of the authors genius. For the effect both in Caleb Williams and S<sup>t</sup> Leon,

<sup>1</sup> ‘Lectures on the English Comic Writers’: Lecture VI, On the English Novelists.

is entirely made out, not by facts nor dates, by blackletter or magazine learning, by transcript nor record, but by intense and patient study of the human heart, and by an imagination projecting itself into certain situations, and capable of working up its imaginary feelings to the height of reality.<sup>1</sup>) This appears to me quite correct—now I will copy the other Poem—it is on the double immortality of Poets—

Bards of Passion and of Mirth  
 Ye have left your souls on earth—  
 Have ye souls in heaven too  
 Double liv'd in regions new?  
 Yes—and those of heaven commune  
 With the s(p)heres of Sun & Moon;  
 With the noise of fountains wondrous  
 And the parle of voices thundrous;  
 With the Whisper of heavens trees,  
 And one anothers, in soft ease  
 Seated on elysian Lawns,  
 Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;  
 Underneath large bluebells tented  
 Where the daisies are rose scented  
 And the rose herself has got  
 Perfume that on Earth is not.  
 Where the nightingale doth sing  
 Not a senseless tranced thing;  
 But melodious truth divine  
 Philosophic numbers fine;  
 Tales and golden histories  
 Of Heaven and its Mysteries.

Thus ye live on Earth<sup>2</sup> and then  
 On the Earth ye live again;  
 And the souls ye left behind you  
 Teach us here the way to find you,  
 Where your other Souls are joying  
 Never slumber'd, never cloying.  
 Here your earth born souls still speak  
 To mortals of the little week

<sup>1</sup> 'Lectures on the English Comic Writers': Lecture VI.

<sup>2</sup> Probably a clerical error for 'high', that being the word used in Keats's printed version of the poem and in the volume of Beaumont and Fletcher's Works into which he copied it.

They must sojourn with their cares;  
 Of their sorrows and delights  
 Of their Passion and their spites;  
 Of their glory and their shame—  
 What doth strengthen and what maim.  
 Thus ye teach us every day  
 Wisdom though fled far away.  
 Bards of Passion and of Mirth  
 Ye have left your Souls on Earth  
 Ye have Souls in heaven too  
 Double liv'd in Regions new!

These are specimens of a sort of rondeau which I think I shall become partial to—because you have one idea amplified with greater ease and more delight and freedom than in the sonnet. It is my intention to wait a few years before I publish any minor poems—and then I hope to have a volume of some worth—and which those people will realish who cannot bear the burthen of a long poem. In my journal I intend to copy the poems I write the days they are written—there is just room I see in this page to copy a little thing I wrote off to some Music as it was playing<sup>1</sup>—

I had a dove and the sweet dove died,  
 And I have thought it died of grieving:  
 O what could it mourn for? it was tied  
 With a silken thread of my own hands weaving.  
 Sweet little red-feet why did you die?  
 Why would you leave me—sweet dove why?  
 You liv'd alone on the forest tree.  
 Why pretty thing could you not live with me?  
 I kiss'd you oft, and I gave you white peas—  
 Why not live sweetly as in the green trees!

Sunday.<sup>2</sup> I have been dining with Dilke to day—He is up to his Ears in Walpole's letters. M<sup>r</sup> Manker<sup>3</sup> is there, ~~and~~ I have come round to see if I can conjure up any thing

<sup>1</sup> It was possibly Miss Charlotte Reynolds who played the tune on the pianoforte: she told me that she sometimes played to Keats for hours.—H.B.F.

<sup>2</sup> The 3rd of January.

<sup>3</sup> 'M<sup>r</sup> Manker' is no doubt the person mentioned as 'Mancur' in Letter 123 of the following Spring, just after the Spenserian Stanzas on Brown (see p. 324); he was a friend of Charles Brown to whose son Carlino he offered a situation in October 1839: his address then was No. 25 Great Winchester Street, London. Brown in his letters writes 'Mancur'; see 'Some Letters and Miscellanea of Charles Brown', Oxford University Press, 1937.

for you—Kirkman came down to see me this morning—his family has been very badly off lately—He told me of a villainous trick of his Uncle William in Newgate Street who became sole Creditor to his father under pretence of serving him, and put an execution on his own Sister's goods. He went in to the family at Portsmouth; conversed with them, went out and sent in the Sherif's officer. He tells me too of abominable behaviour of Archer to Caroline Mathew<sup>1</sup>—Archer has lived nearly at the Mathews these two years; he has been amusing Caroline all this time—and now he has written a Letter to M<sup>rs</sup> M. declining on pretence of inability to support a wife as he would wish, all thoughts of marriage. What is the worst is, Caroline is 27 years old—It is an abominable matter—He has called upon me twice lately—I was out both times. What can it be for—There is a letter to day in the Examiner to the Electors of Westminster on M<sup>r</sup> Hobhouse's account—In it there is a good Character of Cobbet—I have not the paper by me or I would copy it—I do not think I have mentioned the Discovery of an african Kingdom—the account is much the same as the first accounts of Mexico—all magnificence—there is a Book being written about it—I will read it and give you the cream in my next. The romance we have heard upon it runs thus: they have window frames of gold—100,000 infantry—human sacrifices—The Gentleman who is the adventurer<sup>2</sup> has his wife with him—she I am told is a beautiful little sylphid woman—her husband was to have been sacrificed to their Gods and was led through a Chamber filled with different instruments of torture with priveledge to choose what death he would die without their having a thought of his aversion to such a death they considering it a supreme distinction—However he was let off and became a favorite with the King who at last openly patronised him, though at first on account of the Jealousy of his Ministers he was wont to hold conversations with his Majesty in the dark middle of the night<sup>3</sup>—All this sounds a little Bluebeardish—but I hope it is true—There is another thing I must mention of the mo-

<sup>1</sup> One of the two ladies, cousins of George Felton Mathew, to whom in 1815 Keats addressed verses, 'To Some Ladies' and 'On receiving a curious Shell . . . from the same Ladies', 'Poems', 1817.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Edward Bowdich (1791–1824). His book was 'A Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee', 1819.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'Measure for Measure', iv. i. 37 and 'Hamlet', i. ii. 198.

mentous kind;—but I must mind my periods in it—Mr<sup>s</sup> Dilke has two Cats—a Mother and a Daughter—now the Mother is a tabby and the daughter a black and white like the spotted child—Now it appears ominous to me for the doors of both houses are opened frequently—so that there is a complete thoroughfare for both Cats (there being no board up to the contrary) they may one and several of them come into my room *ad libitum*. But no—the Tabby only comes—whether from sympathy from ann the maid or me I can not tell—or whether Brown has left behind him uryatmospheric spir(i)t of Maidenhood I cannot tell. The Cat is not an old Maid herself—her daughter is a proof of it. I have questioned her—I have look'd at the lines of her paw—I have felt her pulse—to no purpose—Why should the *old* Cat come to me? I ask myself—and myself has not a word to answer. It may come to light some day; if it does you shall hear of it. Kirkman this morning promised to write a few lines for you and send them to Haslam. I do not think I have any thing to say in the Business way. You will let me know what you would wish done with your property in England—What things you would wish sent out—but I am quite in the dark about what you are doing—if I do not hear soon I shall put on my Wings and be after you—I will in my next, and after I have seen your next letter—tell you my own particular idea of America. Your next letter will be the key by which I shall open your hearts and see what spaces want filling, with any particular information—Whether the affairs of Europe are more or less interesting to you—whether you would like to hear of the Theatres—of the bear Garden—of the Boxers—the Painters—The Lecturers—the Dress—The Progress of Dandyism. The Progress of Courtship—or the fate of Mary Millar—being a full true and très particular account of Miss M's ten Suitors—How the first tried the effect of swearing; the second of stammering; the third of whispering; the fourth of sonnets—the fifth of spanish leather boots; the sixth of flattering her body—the seventh of flattering her mind—the eighth of flattering himself—the ninth stuck to the Mother—the tenth kissed the Chambermaid and told her to tell her Mistress—But he was soon discharged his reading lead him into an error—he could not sport the Sir Lucius<sup>1</sup> to any advantage—

<sup>1</sup> Sir Lucius O'Trigger in Sheridan's 'The Rivals'.



And now for this time I bid you good by I have been thi(nki)ng of these sheets so long that I appear in closing them to take my leave of you—but that is not it—I shall immediatly as I send this off begin my journal—when some days (I) shall write no more than 10 lines and others 10 times as much. M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke is knocking at the wall for Tea is ready—I will tell you what sort of a tea it is and then bid you—Good bye—This is monday morning<sup>1</sup>—nothing particular happened yesterday evening, except that when the tray came up M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke and I had a battle with celery stalks—she sends her love to you—I shall close this and send it immediately to Haslam—remaining ever

My dearest brother and sister

Your most affectionate Brother

John—

*From MARIA DILKE to FANNY KEATS. Friday 18 Dec. 1818.*

*Address written by Keats: Miss Keats | Miss Tuckey's | Walthamstow*

*Postmark: DE 21 1818.*

Dec<sup>r</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> 1818—

Wentworth Place

Near Pond Street

Hampstead.

I know not how to express my thanks my dear Miss Keats for your very kind present,<sup>2</sup> and fear much I am depriving some other Friend of them, they are very beautiful, and (I) shall value them much, do you think I may hope for the pleasure of your Company? Your Brother is staying with M<sup>r</sup> Brown, and our next door Neighbour (so) that he would be with us constantly. Pray do give my Compliments to M<sup>rs</sup> Abbey and ask her to allow you to come, say that both myself and M<sup>r</sup> Dilke will take the greatest care of you, and do everything in our power to make you comfortable. Your Brother has just been with us, and is very well, he got home very well the other Even'g, but not till past 10 o'clock, very cold, and very hungry both. I must now conclude, and should like to hear from you much, believing me to be

yours most sincerely

Maria Dilke

Please to present my Comp<sup>ts</sup> to Miss Tuckey

<sup>1</sup> The 4th of January, 1819.

<sup>2</sup> Face-screens and a work-bag: see Letter 98, pp. 246-7.

99. To FANNY KEATS. *Friday 18 Dec. 1818*

*Address:* Miss Keats | Miss Tuckey's | Walthamstow

*Postmark:* DE 21 1818.

My dear Fanny,

So much time has passed with me this last year, without my having had power to employ it—which is absolutely necessary—that I am glad to take advantage of the present time to study and write a little—that is the reason I have not been to see you—However if on Monday the frost continue I will endeavour to be up early and cut across the fields.

Your ever affectionate Brother

John—

100. To RICHARD WOODHOUSE. *Friday 18 Dec. 1818.*

*Address:* Rich<sup>d</sup> Woodhouse, Esq<sup>re</sup> | Taylor and Hessey | Fleet Street—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 18 DE 1818.

Wentworth Place Friday Morn—

My dear Woodhouse

I am greatly obliged to you.<sup>1</sup> I must needs feel flattered by making an impression on a set of Ladies—I should be content to do so in meretricious romance verse if they alone and not Men were to judge.<sup>2</sup> I should like very much to know those Ladies—tho' look here Woodhouse—I have a new leaf to turn over—I must work—I must read—I must write—I am unable to afford time for new acquaintances—I am scarcely able to do my duty to those I have. Leave the matter to chance. But do not forget to give my Rembr<sup>s</sup> to you(r) Cousin.

Yours most sincerely

John Keats

99. This note is written on the back of Mrs. Dilke's letter to Fanny Keats given above, which is dated the 18th of December 1818. Cf. Letter 98, p. 252, for mention of proposed visit to Walthamstow.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. for his letter of the 10th of December, see p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 234, p. 516.

101. To M<sup>rs</sup> REYNOLDS. Tuesday (15 or 22) Dec. 1818.

Address: M<sup>rs</sup> Reynolds | Little Britain | Christ's Hospital.

Imperfect postmark: DE 1818.

Wentworth Place Tuesd.

My dear M<sup>rs</sup> Reynolds,

When I left you yesterday, 'twas with the conviction that you thought I had received no previous invitation for Christmas day: the truth is I had, and had accepted it under the conviction that I should be in Hampshire at the time: else believe me I should not have done so, but kept in Mind my old friends. I will not speak of the proportion of pleasure I may receive at different Houses—that never enters my head—you may take for a truth that I would have given up even what I did see to be a greater pleasure, for the sake of old acquaintanceship—time is nothing—two years are as long as twenty.

Yours faithfully  
John Keats

102. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. Tuesday 22 Dec. 1818.

Address: B. R. Haydon | Lisson Grove North | Paddington

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and DE 23 1818

Tuesday Wentworth Place—

My dear Haydon,

Upon my Soul I never felt your going out of the room at all—and believe me I never rhodomontade any where but in your Company—my general Life in Society is silence. I feel in myself all the vices of a Poet, irritability, love of effect and admiration—and influenced by such devils I may at times say more ridiculous things than I am aware of—but I will put a stop to that in a manner I have long resolved upon—I will buy a gold ring and put it on my finger—and from that time a Man of superior head shall never have occasion to pity me, or one of inferior

101. Miss Charlotte Reynolds told me that this letter was sent to her mother a few days before Christmas Day 1818. The choice is therefore between Tuesday the 15th of December and Tuesday the 22nd of December; and the later date seems the likelier. Miss Reynolds thought that the other invitation was from Mrs. Brawne.—H.B.F.—This is confirmed in a letter of Fanny Brawne's.

Nunskull to chuckle at me—I am certainly more for greatness in a Shade than in the open day—I am speaking as a mortal—I should say I value more the Priviledge of seeing great things in loneliness than the fame of a Prophet—Yet here I am sinning—so I will turn to a thing I have thought on more—I mean you(r) means till your Picture be finished: not only now but for this year and half have I thought of it. Believe me Haydon I have that sort of fire in my Heart that would sacrifice every thing I have to your service—I speak without any reserve—I know you would do so for me—I open my heart to you in a few words—I will do this sooner than you shall be distressed: but let me be the last stay—ask the rich lovers of art first—I'll tell you why—I have a little money which may enable me to study and to travel three or four years—I never expect to get any thing by my Books: and moreover I wish to avoid publishing—I admire Human Nature but I do not like *Men*—I should like to compose things honourable to Man—but not fingerable over by *Men*. So I am anxious to exist with(out) troubling the printer's devil or drawing upon Men's and Women's admiration—in which great solitude I hope God will give me strength to rejoice. Try the long purses—but do not sell your drawing or I shall consider it a breach of friendship. I am sorry I was not at home when Salmon<sup>1</sup> called. Do write and let me know all you(r) present whys and wherefores.

Your's most faithfully  
John Keats

u.5

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. (Dec. 1818.)

From an undated draft or rough copy wafered into Haydon's Journal.

Keats! Upon my Soul I could have wept at your letter; to find one of real heart & feeling is to me a blessed solace; I have met with such heartless treatment from those to whom without reserve I had given my Friendship, that I expected no(t) what I wished in human Nature. There is only one besides yourself whoever offer(ed to) act & did act with such affection, he wa(s) of a different temperament from us; coo(ler) but not kinder, he did his best from *moral* feeling, and not from bursting impulse; but still he did it; you have behaved to me as I would have behaved to you my dear fellow, and if I am constrained to come to you at last; your property shall only be a transfer for a limited time on such security as will ensure you repayment in case of my

<sup>1</sup> Haydon notes on the letter—'My Servant'.

Death—that is whatever part of it you assist me with: but I will try every corner first—Ah my dear Keats my illness has been a severe touch!—I declare to God I do not feel alone in the World now you have written me that letter. If you go on writing as you <rep>eated the other night, you may wish to <live> in a sublime solitude, but you will <n>ot be allowed—I approve most completely your plan of travels and study, and <s>hould suffer torture if my wants <in>terrupted it—in short they shall not <m>y dear Keats—I believe you from my soul when you say you would sacrifice all for me; and when your means are gone, if God give me means my heart & house & home & every thing shall be shared with you—I mean this too—It has often occurred to me but I have never spoken of it—My great object is the public encouragement of historical painting and the glory of England in high Art, to ensure these I would lay my head on the block this instant. My illness the consequence of early excess in study, has fatigued most of my Friends—I have no reason to complain of the lovers of Art, I have been liberally assisted; but when a man comes again with a tale of his ill health; they dont believe him my dear Keats; can I bear the thousandth part of a dry hesitation, the searching scrutiny of an apprehensi<on> of insincerity; the musing hum of a *sounding* question; the prying, petty, paltr<y> whining doubt, that is inferred from <a request?> *for a day to consider!*—Ah Kea<ts> this is sad work for one of my soul, & Ambition. The truest thing you ever said of mortal was that I had a touch of Alexander in me!—I have, I know it, and the World shall know it, but this is the purgative drug I must first take.—Come so<o>n my dear fellow—Sunday nobody is coming I believe—& I will lay <my> Soul bare before you—

Your affectionate Friend  
B. R. Haydon

103. To JOHN TAYLOR. *Thursday 24 Dec. 1818.*

*Address:* John Taylor Esq<sup>re</sup> | Taylor & Hessey's | Fleet Street.

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and DE 24 1818.

Wentworth Place

My dear Taylor

Can you lend me 30£ for a short time?—ten I want for myself—and twenty for a friend—which will be repaid me by the middle of next Month—I shall go to Chichester on Wednesday<sup>1</sup> and perhaps stay a fortnight—I am affraid I shall not be able to dine with you before I return—Remember me to Woodhouse—

Your's sincerely  
John Keats

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the 30th of December.

104. To FANNY KEATS. *Wednesday 30 Dec. 1818.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Pancras Lane, Queen Street | Cheapside.

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and DE 31 1818.

Wentworth Place Wednesday.

My dear Fanny,

I am confined at Hampstead with a sore throat; but I do not expect it will keep me above two or three days. I intended to have been in Town yesterday but feel obliged to be careful a little while. I am in general so careless of these trifles, that they tease me for Months, when a few days care is all that is necessary. I shall not neglect any chance of an endeavour to let you return to School—nor to procure you a Visit to M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke's which I have great fears about. Write me if you can find time—and also get a few lines ready for George as the Post sails next Wednesday.

Your affectionate Brother  
John—

105. To M<sup>rs</sup> WYLIE. (*Wednesday 30 Dec. 1818.*)

*No address or postmark.*

Wentworth Place.

My dear Madam,

A slight return of the sore throat to which I have been lately subject has prevented me from coming to see you. I am persua<sup>d</sup>ed to rest for a few days as I have already felt the benefit of a two days repose—On Wednesday next the Mail sails for Philadelphia—if I should not see you before Sunday, I think it would be better to enclose your letters to M<sup>r</sup> Haslam. Tell Charles and Henry—Believe me

Your's affectionately  
John Keats—

105. This undated letter is written in the same bold hand as Letter 104 to Fanny Keats and, as far as I can judge from a photograph, on similar paper. It also tells the same story about his throat and the departure of the mail. I conclude it was written on the 30th of December, 1818.

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS,<sup>1</sup> Friday

⟨1 Jan. 1819⟩.

My dear Keats,

I am gone out to walk in a positive agony—my eyes are so weak I can do nothing to day—if I did to day I should be totally incapacitated to-morrow—therefore you will confer a great favor on me to come to-morrow instead between ten and eleven—as I shall walk about all day in the air, and perhaps will call on you before three—I hope in God, by rest to day—to be quite adequate to it tomorrow.

Yours most affect'ly

Dear Keats

B R Haydon

Friday Morning

106. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. ⟨Saturday  
2 Jan. 1819.⟩

No address or postmark.

Wentworth Place

My dear Haydon,

I had an engagement to day—and it is so fine a morning that I cannot put it off—I will be with you tomorrow—when we will thank the Gods though you have bad eyes and I am idle.

I regret more than any thing the not being able to dine with you to day—I have had several movements that way—but then I should disappoint one who has been my true friend. I will be with you tomorrow morning and stop all day—we will hate the profane vulgar<sup>2</sup> & make us Wings—God bless you

J. Keats

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS,<sup>3</sup> Thursday  
7 Jan. 1819.

No address or postmark.

My dear Keats,

I now frankly tell you I will accept your friendly offer; I hope you will pardon my telling you so, but I am disappointed where I expected

<sup>1</sup> This letter is inserted in Haydon's Journal on the reverse of the leaf on which Letter 106 is fastened and immediately before the entries for the 31st of December 1818. I assign Haydon's letter to the 1st of January 1819 and Keats's to the following day.

<sup>2</sup> Horace, 'Odes', III. i. 1.

<sup>3</sup> This letter is wafered into Haydon's Journal together with Letter 107 which seems to be a reply to it. Possibly Haydon wrote it on Thursday the 7th of January and kept it over until he could deliver it personally on the following Monday.

1819

Letter 108

not to be and my only hope for the concluding difficulties of my Picture lie(s) in *you*—I leave this in case you are not at home. Do let me hear from you how you are, and when I shall get my bond ready for you, for that is the best way for me to do, at two years—

I am Dear Keats

Your affectionate Friend

Jan. 7th 1819.

B. R. Haydon

107. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Monday* (11 Jan. 1819).

*No address or postmark.*

Wentworth Place

Monday af

My dear Haydon,

I have been out this morning, and did not therefore see your note till this minute, or I would have gone to town directly—it is now too late for to day. I will be in town early tomorrow, and trust I shall be able to lend you assistance noon or night. I was struck with the improvement in the architectural part of your Picture—and, now I think on it, I cannot help wond(e)ring you should have had it so poor, especially after the Soloman. Excuse this dry bones of a note: for though my pen may grow cold, I should be sorry my Life should freeze—

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

108. To FANNY KEATS. (Jan. 1819.)

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow—

*Postmark illegible.*

Wentworth Place—

My dear Fanny,

I send this to Walthamstow for fear you should not be at Pancras Lane when I call tomorrow—before going into Hampshire for a few days—it will not be more I assure you—You may think how disappointed I am in not being able to see you more and spend more time with you than I do—but how can it be helped?

The thought is a continual vexation to me—and often hinders me from reading and composing—Write to me as often as you can—and believe me

Your affectionate Brother

John—



109. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. (Jan. 1819.)

No address or postmark.

Wentworth Place.

My dear Haydon,

We are very unlucky—I should have stopped to dine with you, but I knew I should not have been able to leave you in time for my plaguy sore throat; which is getting well—

I shall have a little trouble in procuring the Money and a great ordeal to go through—No trouble indeed to any one else—or ordeal either. I mean I shall have to go to town some thrice, and stand in the Bank an hour or two—to me worse than any thing in Dante—. I should have less chance with the people around me than Orpheus had with the Stones—I have been writing a little now and then lately: but nothing to speak off—being discontented and as it were moulting—yet I do not think I shall ever come to the rope or the Pistol: for after a day or two's melancholy, although I smoke more and more my own insufficiency—I see by little and little more of what is to be done, and how it is to be done, should I ever be able to do it—On my Soul there should be some reward for that continual 'agonie ennuiyeuse.' I was thinking of going into Hampshire for a few days: I have been delaying it longer than I intended. You shall see me soon; and do not be at all anxious, for *this* time I really will do, what I never did before in my life, business in good time, and properly—With respect to the Bond—it may be a satisfaction to you, to let me have it: but as you love me do not let there be any mention of interest, although we are mortal men—and bind ourselves for fear of death—

Your's for ever

John Keats —

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. Thursday  
14 Jan. 1819.

No address or postmark.

My dear Keats,

Jay—14 1819

✓ Your letter was every thing that is kind, affectionate and Friendly. I depend on it; it has relieved my anxious mind.—The 'agonie

1819

Letter 110

onuyouse' you talk of be assured is nothing but the intense searching of a glorious spirit; & the dissatisfaction it feels at its first contact with the muddy world—but it will go off—& bye & bye you will shine through it with 'fresh A(r)gent'<sup>1</sup>—dont let it injure your health, for two years I felt that agony—

Write me before that I may be home when you come.

God bless you my dear Keats

Yours ever

B. R. Haydon.

110. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. (*January 1819.*)

*Address:* B R Haydon, Esq<sup>r</sup> | Lisson Grove North | Paddington.

*Postmark:* HAMPSTEAD: dated postmark illegible.

Wentworth Place—

My dear Haydon,

My throat has not suffered me yet to expose myself to the night air: however I have been to town in the day time—have had several interviews with my guardian—have written him a rather plain spoken Letter—which has had its effect; and he now seems inclined to put no stumbling block in my way: so that I see a good prospect of performing my promise. What I should have lent you ere this if I could have got it, was belonging to poor Tom—and the difficulty is whether I am to inherit it before my Sister is of age; a period of six years—Should it be so I must incontinently take to Corderoy Trowsers. But I am nearly confident 'tis all a Bam<sup>2</sup>—I shall see you soon—but do let me have a line to day or tomorrow concerning your health and spirits

Your sincere friend

John Keats

<sup>1</sup> The word is not clearly written in the holograph, but a reference was probably intended to one of the instances in which Keats uses the word *argent*.

110. This undated letter is assigned to January 1819 by reason of the subject. The letter from Haydon which follows it seems to be the reply. Haydon's date is possibly a mistake for Saturday, the 23rd of January; the only Saturday in 1819 falling on the 21st was in August when Keats was at Winchester.

<sup>2</sup> Bam (archaic) = Hoax.

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. *Saturday*  
*(23 January) 1819.*

*No address or postmark.*

My dear Keats,

Your letter was a balm to my heart & soul; I did not like to write, because it might look like a hint; I did not like to call; I did not (know) what to do, and you have relieved me. I feel grateful indeed for your kindness & trouble, I have no doubt you will be remunerated by my ultimate triumph. Indeed I have had an earnest ~~this~~ last fortnight of the most glorious kind—My Exhibition has struck a blow my dear fellow, that will sound for ever!—I will walk over to see you Monday if well, & not rainy: the drawings have been felt by all classes to the core of their hearts, and to the core of the core. God give my eyes for ten years & such Friends as you—by Heaven I'll plunge into the bottom of the sea, where plummets have now never sounded, & never will be able to sound, with such impetus that the antipodes shall see my head drive through on their side of the Earth to their dismay & terror.—I am glad you take care of your throat, if you are cautious it will radically leave you; dont trifle & keep it *always getting well*, but get it quite well. & Believe me my dear Keats most affectionately & ardently attached to you

B. R. Haydon.

You say nothing of your Poem, I will be with you on Monday by 12—if fine

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> 1819

III. To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE and  
 MARIA DILKE. *Sunday 24 Jan. 1819.*

From CHARLES BROWN and KEATS.<sup>1</sup>

*Address:* To | Cha<sup>s</sup> W. Dilke Esq<sup>r</sup> | Navy Pay Office | Somerset  
 house | London.

*Postmark:* 25 JA 1819.

Bedhampton. 24<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> 1819.

Dear Dilke,

This letter is for your Wife, and if you are a Gentleman, you will deliver it to her, without reading one word further. 'read thou Squire. There is a wager depending on this.

~~~~~  
 My charming dear Mr<sup>s</sup> Dilke,

It was delightful to receive a letter from you,—but such a letter! what presumption in me to attempt to answer it! Where shall I find, in my poor brain, such gibes, such jeers, such flashes of merriment? Alas! you will say, as you read me, Alas! poor Brown! quite chop

<sup>1</sup> Of this joint composition Keats's portion is printed in the larger and Brown's portion in the smaller type. The letter was addressed on the outside by Brown.

fallen!<sup>1</sup> But that's not true; my chops have been beautifully plumped out since I came here; my dinners have been good & nourishing, & my inside never washed by a red herring broth. Then my mind has been so happy! I have been smiled on by the fair ones, the Lacy's, the Prices, & the Mullings's, but not by the Richards's; Old Dicky has not called here during my visit,—I have not seen him; the whole of the family are *shuffling* to carriage folks for acquaintances, *cutting* their old friends, and *dealing* out pride & folly, while we allow they have got the *odd trick*, but dispute their *honours*. I was determined to be beforehand with them, & behaved cavalierly & neglectingly to the family, & passed the girls in Havant with a slight bow.—Keats is much better, owing to a strict forbearance from a third glass of wine. He & I walked from Chichester yesterday; we were here at 3, but the Dinner was finished; a brace of Muir fowl had been dressed; I ate a piece of the breast cold, & it was not tainted; I dared not venture further. Mr Snook was nearly turned sick by being merely asked to take a mouthful. The other brace was so *high*, that the Cook declined preparing them for the spit, & they were thrown away. I see your husband declared them to be in excellent order; I suppose he enjoyed them in a disgusting manner,—sucking the rotten flesh off the bones, & crunching the putrid bones. Did you eat any? I hope not, for an *ooman* should be delicate in her food.—O you Jezabel! to sit quietly in your room, while the thieves were ransacking my house! No doubt poor Ann's throat was cut; has the Coroner sat on her yet?—Mrs Snook says she knows how to hold a pen very well, & wants no lessons from me; only think of the vanity of the *ooman*! She tells me to make honourable mention of your letter which she received at Breakfast time, but how can I do so? I have not read it; & I'll lay my life it is not a tenth part so good as mine,—pshaw on your letter to her!—On Tuesday night I think you'll see me. In the mean time I'll not say a word about spasms in the way of my profession, tho' as your friend I must profess myself very sorry. Keats & I are going to call on Mr Butler & Mr Burton this morning, & to-morrow we shall go to Stansted<sup>2</sup> to see Mr Way's Chapel consecrated by the two Bigwigs of Gloucester & St. Davids. If that vile Carver & Gilder does not do me justice, I'll annoy him all his life with legal expences at every quarter, if my rent is not sent to the day, & that will not be revenge enough for the trouble & confusion he has put me to.—Mrs Dilke is remarkably well for Mrs Dilke<sup>3</sup> in winter.—Have you heard any thing of John Blagden; he is off! want of business has made him play the fool,—I am

<sup>1</sup> 'Hamlet', v. i. 207-11.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 123, p. 299. 'Stansted' is now the accepted spelling.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Dilke of Chichester, the mother of Keats's friend.

sorry—that Brown and you are getting so very witty—my modest feathered Pen frizzles like baby roast beef at making its entrance among such tantrum sentences—or rather ten senses. Brown *super* or *supper* sirnamed the Sleek has been getting thinner a little by pining opposite Miss Muggins—(Brown says Mullins but I beg leave to differ from him)—we sit it out till ten o’Clock—Miss M. has persuaded Brown to shave his whiskers—he came down to Breakfast like the Sign of the full Moon—his Profile is quite alter’d—He looks more like an oman than I ever could think it possible—and on putting on Mr<sup>s</sup> D’s Calash the deception was complete especially as his voice is trebbld by making love in the draught of a door way. I too am metamorphosed—a young oman here in Bed - - hampton has over persuaded me to wear my Shirtcollar up to my eyes. Mr<sup>s</sup> Snook I catch smoaking it every now and then and I believe Brown does—but I cannot now look sideways—Brown wants to scribble more<sup>1</sup> so I will finish with a marginal note—Viz. Remember me to Wentworth Place and Elm Cottage—not forgetting Millamant—Your’s if possible J. Keats—

This is abominable! I did but go up stairs to put on a clean & starched hand-kerchief, & that overweening rogue read my letter, & scrawled over one of my sheets, and given him a counter-pain,—I wish I could blank-it all over and beat him with

(<sup>k</sup>  
a {certain rod, & have a fresh one bolstered up, Ah! he may dress me as he likes but he shan’t ticlke me pillow the feathers,—I would not give a tester for such puns, let us *ope* brown (erratum—a large *B*—a Bumble B.)<sup>2</sup> will go no further in the Bedroom & not call Mat Snook a relation to Matt-rass—This is grown to a conclusion—I had excellent puns in my head but one bad one from Brown has quite upset me but I am quite set-up for more, but I’m content to be conqueror. Your’s in love, Cha<sup>s</sup> Brown.

N.B. I beg leaf to withdraw all my Puns—they are all wash, an base uns—

<sup>1</sup> The following words are written up the left-hand margin of the third page.

<sup>2</sup> Of the words in parentheses Brown’s are written down and Keats’s up the left-hand margin on the lower and upper doublings, page 4, respectively. Keats’s ‘N.B.’ is written up the left-hand margin of the first page.

1819

Letter 113

112. To WILLIAM MAYOR. *Thursday 4 Feb. 1819.*

*Address:* Mr W<sup>m</sup> Mayor | Gibbons Buildings | Islington.

*Postmarks:* SO. HAMPSTEAD and CAMDEN TOWN 4 FE 1819.

Wentworth Place  
Hampstead—

My dear Mayor,

I have not been entirely well for some time—all from my own fault of exposing myself to the Weather contrary to medical orders—I am now getting better: but cannot yet venture out. Believe me I am very sorry for it. In about a fortnight I will see you either in Town or at Islington. In the mean time, could you spare a day for Hampste(a)d? You can have a bed—Do come by the coach, and enquire your way through Pond street, to Mr Brown's, Wentworth Place—This will be charitable to one not ill enough to forget out-of-doors.

Remember me to your Cousin—and to all whom I may know—If C.C.C. should chance to be with you—give my particular greeting to him; with the assurance of my constant idea of him—notwithstanding our long separation and my antipathy = indolentissimum to letter writing.

Yours truly  
John Keats

113. To FANNY KEATS. *Thursday (4 or 11) Feb. 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats.

*No postmark:* probably sent by coach.

Wentworth Place—  
Feby. Thursday—

My dear Fanny,

Your Letter to me at Bedhampton hurt me very much, —What objection can the(r)e be to your receiving a Letter

112. William Mayor was apparently living with his father at Sebbons (not Gibbons) Buildings at this time. He was a pupil of Haydon's in whose studio he met the Landseers, William Bewick, and George Lance. About 1822 he started travelling on the continent where in the course of a long life he acquired a fine collection of paintings representative of the continental schools. He was a dealer as well as a collector, and when he died in 1874 his pictures were sold and many of them passed into Sir Edward Poynter's collection.

from me? At Bedhampton I was unwell and did not go out of the Garden Gate but twice or thrice during the fortnight I was there—Since I came back I have been taking care of myself—I have been obliged to do so, and am now in hopes that by this care I shall get rid of a sore throat which has haunted me at intervals nearly a twelve-month. I had always a presentiment of not being able to succeed in persuading Mr Abbey to let you remain longer at School—I am very sorry that he will not consent. I recommend you to keep up all that you know and to learn more by yourself however little. The time will come when you will be more pleased with Life—look forward to that time and, though it may appear a trifle, be careful not to let the idle and retired Life you lead fix any awkward habit or behaviour on you—whether you sit or walk—endeavour to let it be in a seemly and if possible a graceful manner. We have been very little together: but you have not the less been with me in thought. You have no one in the world besides me who would sacrifice any thing for you—I feel myself the only Protector you have. In all your little troubles think of me with the thought that there is at least one person in England who if he could would help you out of them—I live in hopes of being able to make you happy—I should not perhaps write in this manner, if it were not for the fear of not being able to see you often, or long together. I am in hopes Mr Abbey will not object any more to your receiving a letter now and then from me. How unreasonable! I want a few more lines from you for George—there are some young Men, acquaintances of a Schoolfellow of mine, going out to Birkbeck's at the latter end of this Month. I am in expectation every day of hearing from George—I begin to fear his last letters Miscarried. I shall be in town tomorrow—if you should not be in town, I shall send this little parcel by the Walthamstow Coach. I think you will like Goldsmith. Write me soon—

Your affectionate Brother

John —

Mr<sup>s</sup> Dilke has not been very well—she is gone a walk to town to day for exercise

1819

Letter 115

114. To FANNY KEATS. *Saturday 27 Feb. 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 27 FE 1819.

Wentworth Place Saturday Morn—

My dear Fanny,

I intended to have not failed to do as you requested, and write you as you say once a fortnight. On looking to your letter I find there is no date; and not knowing how long it is since I received it I do not precisely know how great a sinner I am. I am getting quite well, and Mr<sup>s</sup> Dilke is getting on pretty well. You must pay no attention to Mr<sup>s</sup> Abbey's unfeeling and ignorant gabble. You can't stop an old woman's crying more than you can a Child's—The old woman is the greatest nuisance because she is too old for the rod. Many people live opposite a Bla(c)ksmith's till they cannot hear the hammer. I have been in Town for two or three days and came back last night. I have been a little concerned at not hearing from George—I continue in daily expectation. Keep on reading and play as much on the music and the grassplot as you can. I should like to take possession of those Gras(s)-plots for a Month or so; and send Mr<sup>s</sup> A. to Town to count coffee berries instead of currant Bunches, for I want you to teach me a few common dancing steps—and I would buy a Watch box to practise them in by myself. I think I had better always pay the postage of these Letters. I shall send you another book the first time I am in Town early enough to book it with one of the morning Walthamstow Coaches. You did not say a word about your Chilblains. Write me directly and let me know about them—Your Letter shall be answered like an echo.

Your affectionate Brother  
John —

115. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Monday 8 March 1819.*

*Address:* Not recorded.

*Postmark:* 8 MR 1819.

My dear Haydon,

You must be wondering where I am and what I am about! I am mostly at Hampstead, and about nothing;



being in a sort of *qui bono temper*, not exactly on the road to an epic poem. Nor must you think I have forgotten you. No, I have about every three days been to Abbey's and to the Law(y)ers. Do let me know how you have been getting on, and in what spirits you are.

You got out gloriously in yesterday's Examiner.<sup>1</sup> What a set of little people we live amongst! I went the other day into an ironmonger's shop—without any change in my sensations—men and tin kettles are much the same in these days—they do not study like children at five and thirty—but they talk like men of twenty. Conversation is not a search after knowle(d)ge, but an endeavour at effect.

In this respect two most opposite men, Wordsworth and Hunt, are the same. A friend of mine observed the other day that if Lord Bacon were to make any remark in a party of the present day, the conversation would stop on the sudden. I am convinced of this, and from this I have come to this resolution—never to write for the sake of writing or making a poem, but from running over with any little knowledge or experience which many years of reflection may perhaps give me; otherwise I will be dumb. What imagination I have I shall enjoy, and greatly, for I have experienced the satisfaction of having great conceptions without the trouble of sonnetteering. I will not spoil my love of gloom by writing an Ode to Darkness!<sup>2</sup>

With respect to my livelihood, I will not write for it,—for I will not run with that most vulgar of all crowds, the literary. Such things I ratify by looking upon myself, and trying myself at lifting mental weights, as it were. I am three and twenty, with little knowle(d)ge and middling intellect. It is true that in the height of enthusiasm I have been cheated into some fine passages; but that is not the thing.

I have not been to see you because all my going out has been to town, and that has been a great deal. Write soon.

Yours constantly,

John Keats

<sup>1</sup> In an article headed 'Attacks on Mr. Haydon' in 'The Examiner', March 7, 1819, pp. 157–8, the painter had replied in a restrained and dignified manner to a virulent attack on him and his activities in training pupils whose drawings were then on exhibition at the British Gallery.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. sonnet in Letter 123, p. 317.

1819

Letter 116

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. *Wednesday*  
*10 March 1819.*

*Address:* Not recorded.

*Imperfect postmark:* 1819.

My dear Keats,

I have been long, long convinced of the paltry subtleties of conversation to weaken the effect of unwelcome truth, and have left company where truth is never found; of this be assured, effect and effect only, self-consequence and dictatorial controul, are what those love who shine in conversation, at the expense of truth, principle, and every thing else which interferes with their appetite for dominion—temporary dominion. I am most happy you approve of my last Sunday's defence, I hope you will like next equally well. My dear Keats—now I feel the want of your promised assistance—as soon as it is convenient it would indeed be a great, the greatest of blessings. I shall come and see you as soon as this contest is clear of my hands. I cannot before, every moment is so precious.—Take care of your throat, and believe me my dear fellow truly and affectionately your Friend—

B. R. Haydon.

At any rate finish your present great intention of a poem—it is as fine a subject as can be—Once more adieu.—Before the 20th if you could help me it would be nectar and manna and all the blessings of gratified thirst.

116. To FANNY KEATS. *Saturday 13 March 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and MR 13.

Wentworth Place  
March 13<sup>th</sup>

My dear Fanny,

I have been employed lately in writing to George—I do not send him very short letters—but keep on day after day. There were some young Men I think I told you of who were going to the Settlement: they have changed their minds, and I am disappointed in my expectation of sending Letters by them—I went lately to the only dance I have been to these twelve months or shall go to for twelve months again—it was to our Brother in laws' cousin's—She gave a dance for her Birthday and I went for the sake of M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie. I am waiting every day to hear from George. I trust there is no harm in the silence: other people are in the same expectation as we are. On looking at your seal

I cannot tell whether it is done or not with a Tassi(e)<sup>1</sup>—it seems to me to be paste. As I went through Leicester Square lately I was going to call and buy you some, but not knowing but you might have some I would not run the chance of buying duplicates. Tell me if you have any or if you would like any—and whether you would rather have motto ones like that with which I seal this letter;<sup>2</sup> or heads of great Men such as Shakspeare, Milton &c.—or fancy pieces of Art; such as Fame, Adonis &c.—those gentry you read of at the end of the English Dictionary. Tell me also if you want any particular Book; or Pencils, or drawing paper—any thing but live stock. Though I will not now be very severe on it, rememb(e)ring how fond I used to be of Goldfinches, Tomtits, Minnows, Mice, Ticklebacks, Dace, Cock salmon and all the whole tribe of the Bushes and the Brooks: but verily they are better in the Trees and the water—though I must confess even now a partiality for a handsome Globe of gold-fish—then I would have it hold 10 pails of water and be fed continually fresh through a cool pipe with another pipe to let through the floor—well ventilated they would preserve all their beautiful silver and Crimson—Then I would put it before a handsome painted window and shade it all round with myrtles and Japonicas. I should like the window to open onto the Lake of Geneva—and there I'd sit and read all day like the picture of somebody reading. The weather now and then begins to feel like spring; and therefore I have begun my walks on the heath again. Mr<sup>s</sup> Dilke is getting better than she has been as she has at length taken a Physician's advice. She ever and anon asks after you and always bids me remember her in my Letters to you—She is going to leave Hampstead for the sake of educating their Son Charles at the Westminster school. We (Mr Brown and I) shall leave in the beginning of may; I do not know what I shall do or where be all the next Summer. Mr<sup>s</sup> Reynolds has had a sick house; but they are all well now.—You see what news I can send you I do—we all live one day like the other as well as you do—the only differ-

<sup>1</sup> Tassie's imitation gems were very popular in Keats's set. Shelley writes to Peacock from Pisa, March 21, 1821, to go to Leicester Square and get him two pounds' worth, 'among them, the head of Alexander'; and Hunt has a paragraph on them in 'The Indicator', November 17, 1819.

<sup>2</sup> A lyre, surrounded with the motto:

'Qui me néglige me désolé.'

1819

Letter 118

ence is being sick and well—with the variations of single and double knocks; and the story of a dreadful fire in the Newspapers—I mentioned Mr Brown's name—yet I do not think I ever said a word about him to you. He is a friend of mine of two years standing—with whom I walked through Scotland; who has been very kind to me in many things when I most wanted his assistance and with whom I keep house till the first of M<sup>y</sup>—<sup>1</sup> you will know him some day. The name of <sup>the</sup> young Man who came with me<sup>2</sup> is—William Haslam—Ever,

Your affectionate Brother,  
John.

117. To FANNY KEATS. *Wednesday 24 March 1819*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Pancras Lane | Queen St—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and MR 24 1819.

My dear Fanny,

It is impossible for me to call on you to day—for I have particular Business at the other end of the Town this morning, and must be back to Hampstead with all speed to keep a long-agreed-on appointment—Tomorrow I shall see you.

Your affectionate Brother  
John —

118. To JOSEPH SEVERN. *Monday 29 March (1819).*

*Address:* Josph<sup>h</sup> Severn Esq<sup>re</sup> | 19 Fred<sup>e</sup>rick Place | Goswell Street Road

*Imperfect postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 29 MR.

Wentworth Place  
Monday-af<sup>t</sup>—

My dear Severn,

Your note gave me some pain, not on my own account, but on yours—Of course I should never suffer any petty vanity of mine to hinder you in any wise; and therefore

<sup>1</sup> Paper torn.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. on Sunday the 13th of December 1818.

118. The subject of this letter places it before the Royal Academy exhibition of 1819, in which both the portrait of Keats and the picture of 'Hermia and Helena' figured; the portrait was Number 940 in the catalogue, the picture Number 267.

I should say 'put the miniature in the exhibition' if only myself was to be hurt. But, will it not hurt you? What good can it do to any future picture. Even a large picture is lost in that canting place—what a drop of water in the ocean is a Miniature. Those who might chance to see it for the most part if they had ever heard of either of us—and know what we were and of what years would laugh at the puff of the one and the vanity of the other. I am however in these matters a very bad judge—and would advise you to act in a way that appears to yourself the best for your interest. As your He(r)mia and Helena is finished send that without the prologue of a Miniature. I shall see you soon, if you do not pay me a visit sooner—there's a Bull for you.

Yours ever sincerely

John Keats—

119. To FANNY KEATS. *Wednesday 31 March 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbeys Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow—

*Postmark:* MR 31 1819.

Wednesday—

My dear Fanny,

I shall be going to town tomorrow and will call at the Nursery on the road for those roots and seeds you want, which I will send by the Walthamstow stage. The best way, I thought, for you to lea(r)n to answer those questions, is to read over the little book, which I sent from a Bookseller's in town, or you should have had a Letter with it—Tell me whether it will do: if not I will put down the answers for you. I have not yet heard from George—Perhaps if I just give you the heads of the answers it may be better—though I think you will find them all in that little book.

Ans<sup>r</sup> 1—It was instituted by John the Baptist when he baptised those people in the river Jordan who bel(i)eved through him in the coming of Christ—and more particularly when he baptised christ himself.

2 It corresponds to the Jewish Circumscision

3 The meaning is that we are confirmed members of Christ. It is not administered till 14 years of age because before that age the mind <is> not judged to be sufficiently mature and capable. The act of confirmation imposes on the Christian self circumspection; as by that ceremony the

Christian duties of God fathers and godmothers is annulled and put and end to—as you see in the catechism—“they promise and vow three things in my name”—Confirmation absolves this obligation.

4 There are two Sacraments of our Church—Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The Church of Rome has seven Sacraments. The church of Rome includes several ceremonies (I forget what they are) and the civil rite of marriage—I believe Confirmation is a Sacrament with them—Extreme unction or the anointing the extremities of dying persons with holy water. The reason why we have but two Sacraments is—that it is proved from the Scriptures by the great protestant reformers—that only two are commanded by god—the rest adopted by the Church of Rome are human institutions.

5 You must here repeat your belief—and say the question is to(o) hard for you.

6 Look in Isaia(h) for “*A virgin shall conceive*” &c—Look in the Psalms for “*The Kings of the Earth set themselves and the Princes take counsel together*” and “*they parted my Garments among them &c*” and “*My god, my god why has(t) thou forsaken me &c*” In Jeremia(h) “*Comfort ye, comfort ye &c*” In Daniel. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands that breaks the image in pieces is a type of the Kingdom of Christ. Look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chat. Isaiah—Chap 7–9—“*For unto us a Child is born*” 11—Jeremiah Chap XXXI Micah Chap 5—Zechariah Chap 6 and Chap. 13 verse 6. Those I have marked will be sufficient. You will remember their completion in the ~~test~~ new testament.

7<sup>th</sup> The communion of saints is the fruition they enjoy in heaven among one another and in the Divinity of Christ.

8<sup>th</sup> It was instituted on the night of the feast of the Passover at the Last supper with the Twelve; the night Judas betrayed Christ—and you may see in the 26 Mat-(t)hew—It corresponds to the Feast of the Passover in the Jewish Ritual.

9 They expected Christ to be a temporal Prince and being disappointed, rejected him.

10 Look to the Catechism—“What is your duty towards God?”

11<sup>th</sup> The Prophecy to our first parents is this—Genesis 3 Chapter, verse (15) “and I will put enmity between thee

and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; *it shall bruize thy head* and thou shalt bruize his heel—Christ the Son of David by dying on the Cross triumphed over death and the grave from which he saved mankind; and in that way did he ‘bruize the serpent’s head’—

Your affectionate Parson

John—

120. To FANNY KEATS. Monday 12 (April 1819).

Address: Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow

Imperfect postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 13

Wentworth Place

My dear Fanny,

I have been expecting a Letter from you about what the Parson said to your answers. I have thought also of writing to you often, and I am sorry to confess that my neglect of it has been but a small instance of my idleness of late—which has been growing upon me, so that it will require a great shake to get rid of it. I have written nothing, and almost read nothing—but I must turn over a new leaf—One most discouraging thing hinders me—we have no news yet from George—so that I cannot with any confidence continue the Letter I have been preparing for him. Many are in the same state with us and many have heard from the Settlement. They must be well however: and we must consider this silence as good news—I ordered some bulbous roots for you at the Gardeners, and they sent me some, but they were all in bud—and could not be sent, so I put them in our Garden There are some beautiful heaths now in bloom in Pots—either heaths or some seasonable plants I will send you instead—perhaps some that are not yet in bloom that you may see them come out. Tomorrow night I am going to a rout—a thing I am not at all in love with. M<sup>r</sup> Dilke and his Family have left Hampstead—I shall dine with them to day in Westminster where I think I told you they were going to reside for the sake of sending their Son Charles to the ~~Blue~~ Westminster School. I think I mentioned the Death of M<sup>r</sup> Haslam’s Father—

120. The postmark is not clear as to the month; but it is the 13th of some month in 1819; and, seeing that the Dilkes had left Hampstead on 3 April 1819, that news had arrived from George by 13 May, and that the rout took place at Sawrey’s on 13 April, this letter must have been written on the 12th and posted on the 13th of April.

1819

Letter 120

Yesterday week the two Mr Wylies dined with me. I hope you have good store of double violets—I think they are the Princesses of flowers and in a shower of rain, almost as fine as barley sugar drops are to a schoolboy's tongue. I suppose this fine weather the lambs tails give a frisk or two extraordinary—when a boy would cry huzza and a Girl O my! a little Lamb frisks its tail. I have not been lately through Leicester Square—the first time I do I will remember your Seals. I have thought it best to live in Town this Summer, chiefly for the sake of books, which cannot be had with any comfort in the Country—besides my Scotch journey gave me a doze of the Picturesque with which I ought to be contented for some time. Westminster is the place I have pitched upon—the City or any place very confined would soon turn me pale and thin—which is to be avoided. You must make up your mind to get Stout this summer—indeed I have an idea we shall both be *corpu<lent>*<sup>1</sup> old folkes with tripple chins and *stum<py>*<sup>1</sup> thumbs.

Your affectionate Brother  
John

From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. *Monday*  
*12 April 1819.*

Address: John Keats Esq | Brown's Esq | Wandsworth Terrace |  
Hampstead.

Postmark: 13 AP 1819.

My dear Keats,

Monday

Why did you hold out such delusive hopes every letter on such slight foundations?—You have led me on step by step, day by day; never telling <me> the exact circumstances; you paralyzed my exertions in other quarters—and now when I find it is out of your power to do what your heart led you to offer—I am plunged into all my old difficulties with scarcely any time to prepare for them—indeed I cannot help telling you this—because if you could not have commanded it you should have told me so at once. I declare to you I scarcely know which way to turn—

I am dear Keats

Yours ever

B R Haydon

(over)

I am sensible of the trouble you took I am grateful for it, but upon my Soul I cannot help complaining because the result has been so totally unexpected & sudden—and I am floundering where I hoped

<sup>1</sup> Paper torn.



to be firm.—Dont mistake me—I am as attached to you as much & more than to any Man—but really you dont know how <you> may affect me by not letting me know earlier—

121. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Tuesday* (13 April 1819).

*Address:* <B. R. Ha>ydon Esq<sup>r</sup> | <Lisson Gr>ove North | Paddington.

*Postmark cut away.*

Tuesday

My dear Haydon,

When I offered you assistance I thought I had it in my hand; I thought I had nothing to do, but to do. The difficulties I met with arose from the alertness and suspicion of Abbey: and especially from the affairs being still in a Law(y)er's hand—who has been draining our Property for the last 6 years of every charge he could make—I cannot do two things at once, and thus this affair has stopped my pursuits in every way—from the first prospect I had of difficulty. I assure you I have harrassed myself 10 times more than if I alone had been concerned in so much gain or loss. I have also ever told you the exact particulars as well as and as literally as my hopes or fear could translate them: for it was only by parcels that I found all those petty obstacles which for my own sake should not exist a moment—and yet why not—for from my own imprudence and neglect all my accounts are entirely in my Guardians Power. This has taught me a Lesson. Hereafter I will be more correct. I find myself possessed of much less than I thought for and now if I had all on the table all I could do would be to take from it a moderate two years subsistence and lend you the rest; but I cannot say how soon I could become possessed of it. This would be no sacrifice nor any matter worth thinking of—much less than parting as I have more than once done with little sums which might have gradually formed a library to my taste—These sums amount together to nearly 200, which I have but a chance of ever being repaid or paid at a very distant period. I am humble enough to put this in writing from the sense I have of your struggling

121. The body of this letter is complete, but the signature has been cut out and with it the postmark and part of the address. Haydon has noted on it—'To Lady Grah(a)m I gave auto—'.

situation and the great desire that you should <do> me the justice to credit the unostentatious and willing state of my nerves on all such occasions. It has not been my fault. I am doubly hurt at the slightly rep<r>oachful tone of your note ~~as well as~~ and at the occasion of it,—for it must be some other disappointment; you seem'd so sure of some important help when I last saw you—now you have maimed me again; I was whole I had began reading again—when your note came I was engaged in a Book—I dread as much as a Plague the idle fever of two months more without any fruit: I will walk over the first fine day: then see what aspect you<r> affairs have taken, and if they should continue gloomy walk into the City to Abbey and get his consent for I am persuaded that to me alone he will not concede a jot.

122. To FANNY KEATS. *Saturday* <17 April 1819>.

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow

*Postmark:* HAMPSTEAD. Dated postmark illegible.

Wentworth Place Saturday—

My dear Fanny,

If it were but six oClock in the morning I would set off to see you today: if I should do so now I could not stop long enough for a how d'ye do—it is so long a walk through Hornsey and Tottenham—and as for Stage Coaching it besides that it is very expensive it is like going into the Boxes by way of the pit—I cannot go out on Sunday—but if on Monday it should promise as fair as to day I will put on a pair of loose easy palatable boots and me rendre chez vous. I continue increasing my letter to George<sup>1</sup> to send it by one of Birkbeck's sons who is going out soon—so if you will let me have a few more lines, they will be in time—I am glad you got on so well with Mons<sup>r</sup>. le Curè—is he a nice Clergyman—a great deal depends upon a cock'd hat and powder—not gun powder, lord love us, but lady-meal, violet-smooth, dainty-scented lilly-white, feather-soft, wigsby-dressing, coat-collar-spoiling whisker-reaching, pig-tail loving, swans down-puffing, parson-

122. The holograph of this letter was given by Mrs. Llanos to Mr. Frederick Locker, afterwards Locker-Lampson. It is now in the Harvard College Library.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the journal letter following this (No. 123), which was not finished till the 3rd of May, though begun in February.

sweetening powder—I shall call in passing at the tottenham nursery and see if I can find some seasonable plants for you. That is the nearest place—or by our la'kin or lady kin, that is by the virgin Mary's kindred, is there not a twig-manufacturer in Walthamstow? M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke are coming to dine with us to day—they will enjoy the country after Westminster—O there is nothing like fine weather, and health, and Books, and a fine country, and a contented Mind, and Diligent habit of reading and thinking, and an amulet against the ennui—and, please heaven, a little claret-wine cool out of a cellar a mile deep<sup>1</sup>—with a few or a good many ratafia cakes—a rocky basin to bathe in, a strawberry bed to say your prayers to Flora<sup>1</sup> in, a pad nag to go you ten miles or so; two or three sensible people to chat with; two or th(r)ee spiteful folkes to spar with; two or three odd fishes to laugh at and two or three numskuls to argue with—instead of using dumb bells on a rainy day—

~~Two~~ Two or three Posies  
 With two or three simples  
 Two or three Noses  
 With two or th(r)ee pimples  
 Two or three wise men  
 And two or three ninny's  
 Two or three purses  
 And two or three guineas  
 Two or three raps  
 At two or three doors  
 Two or three naps  
 Of two or three hours—  
 Two or three Cats  
 And two or three mice  
 Two or three sprats  
 At a very great price—  
 Two or three sandies  
 And two or three tabbies  
 Two or three dandies—  
 And two M<sup>rs</sup> ——<sup>2</sup> mum!  
 Two or three Smiles  
 And two or three frowns  
 Two or th(r)ee Miles

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Ode to a Nightingale', ll. 11-13.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Abbeyes, of course.

To two or three towns  
 Two or three pegs  
 For two or three bonnets  
 Two or three dove eggs  
 To hatch into sonnets—

Good bye I've an appoantment—can't stop  
 pon word—good bye—now dont get up—  
 open the door myself—go-o-od bye—see ye Monday  
 J—K—

123. *To GEORGE and GEORGIANA KEATS. Sunday  
 14 Feb.—Monday 3 May 1819.*

*No address or postmark.*

Letter C—

Sunday Morn Feby 14<sup>th</sup>

My dear Brother & Sister—

How is it we have not heard from you from the Settlement yet? The Letters must surely have miscarried. I am in expectation every day—Peachey wrote me a few days ago saying some more acquaintances of his were preparing to set out for Birkbeck—therefore I shall take the opportunity of sending you what I can muster in a sheet or two—I am still at Wentworth Place—indeed I have kept in doors lately, resolved if possible to rid myself of my sore throat—consequently I have not been to see your Mother since my return from Chichester—but my absence from her has been a great weight upon me. I say since my return from Chichester—I believe I told you I was going thither—I was nearly a fortnight at M<sup>r</sup> John Snook's and a few days at old M<sup>r</sup> Dilke's<sup>1</sup>—Nothing worth speaking of happened at either place—I took down some of the thin paper and wrote on it a little Poem call'd 'S<sup>t</sup> Agnes Eve'—which you shall have as it is when I have finished the blank part of the rest for you. I went out twice at Chichester to old Dowager card parties. I see very little now, and very few Persons—being almost tired of Men and things.

123. Of this important letter the holograph is not quite complete. The first four quarto pages formerly in the collection of Mr. Howard J. Sachs, of New York, have now joined the main portion in Harvard College Library; the missing sections have been supplied from the Jeffrey transcript as indicated in the footnotes on pages 309, 312, and 341.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dilke notes, 'He went with Brown on a visit to my father's at Chichester and my sister's at Bedhampton'.

Brown and Dilke are very kind and considerate towards me. The Miss Reynoldses have been stoppi(n)g next door lately—but all very dull. Miss Brawne and I have every now and then a chat and a tiff. Brown and Dilke are walking round their Garden hands in Pockets making observations. The Literary world I know nothing about—There is a Poem from Rogers<sup>1</sup> dead born—and another Satire is expected from Byron call'd Don Giovanni—Yesterday I went to town for the first time for these three weeks. I met people from all parts and of all sets—Mr Towers<sup>2</sup>—one of the Holts<sup>3</sup>—Mr Domine Williams—Mr Woodhouse Mr<sup>s</sup> Hazlitt and Son—Mr<sup>s</sup> Webb—Mr<sup>s</sup> Septimus Brown—Mr Woodhouse was looking up at a Book-window in newgate street and being short-sighted twisted his Muscles into so queer a stupe<sup>4</sup> that I stood by in doubt whether it was him or his brother, if he has one and turning round saw Mr<sup>s</sup> Hazlitt<sup>5</sup> with that little Nero her son. Woodhouse on his features subsiding proved to be Woodhouse and not his Brother—I have had a little business with Mr Abbey—From time to time he has behaved to me with a little Brusquerie—this hurt me a little especially when I knew him to be the only Man in England who dared to say a thing to me I did not approve of without its being resented or at least noticed—So I wrote him about it and have made an alteration in my favor—I expect from this to see more of Fanny—who has been quite shut out from me. I see Cobbet has been attacking the Settlement<sup>6</sup>—but I cannot tell what to believe—and shall be all out at elbows till I hear from you. I am invited to Miss Millar's Birthday dance on the 19<sup>th</sup> I am nearly sure I shall not be able to go—a Dance would injure my throat very much. I see very little of Reynolds. Hunt I hear is going on very badly—I mean in money Matters I shall not be surprised to hear of the worst—Haydon too

<sup>1</sup> 'Human Life.'

<sup>2</sup> Charles Cowden Clarke had lodged at the house of his brother-in-law, Mr. Towers, in Warner Street, Clerkenwell.

<sup>3</sup> Probably of Holt and Farren, solicitors, of 38 Threadneedle Street, or Richard Holt, solicitor, of 37 Threadneedle Street: see Letter 167.

<sup>4</sup> 'Stupe', a piece of flannel wrung out of hot liquor for fomenting a wound, was perhaps a reminiscence of hospital days.

<sup>5</sup> Keats actually wrote 'Mr Hazlitt'; her son had curly black hair.

<sup>6</sup> In 'Letters to Morris Birkbeck' in the 'Political Register', February 1819, reprinted in 'A Year's Residence in the United States', Part III, 1819.

in consequence of his eyes is out at elbows. I live as prudently as it is possible for me to do. I have not seen Haslam lately—I have not seen Richards for this half year—Rice for three Months or C. C. C. for God knows when. When I last called in Hen(r)ietta Street<sup>1</sup>—M<sup>rs</sup> Millar was verry unwell—Miss Waldegrave as staid and self possessed as usual—Miss Millar was well—Henry was well. There are two new tragedies—one by the Apostate Man,<sup>2</sup> and one<sup>3</sup> by Miss Jane Porter. Next week I am going to stop at Taylor's for a few days when I will see them both and tell you what they are. M<sup>rs</sup> and M<sup>r</sup> Bentley are well and all the young Carrots. I said nothing of consequence passed at Snook's—no more than this that I like the family very much M<sup>r</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Snook were very kind—we used to have over a little Religion and politics together almost every evening—and sometimes about you—He proposed writing out for me all the best part of his experience in farming ~~for me to~~ to send to you if I should have an opportunity of talking to him about it I will get all I can at all events—but you may say in your answer to this what value you place upon such information. I have not seen M<sup>r</sup> Lewis<sup>4</sup> lately for I have shrunk from going up the hill. M<sup>r</sup> Lewis went a few morning(s) ago to town with M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne they talked about me—and I heard that M<sup>r</sup> L Said a thing I am not at all contented with—Says he 'O, he is quite the little Poet' now this is abominable—you might as well say Buonaparte is quite the little Soldier—You see what it is to be under six foot and not a lord—There is a long fuzz to day in the examiner about a young Man who delighted a young woman with a Valentine—I think it must be Ollier's.<sup>5</sup> Brown and I are thinking of passing the summer at Brussels if we do we shall go about the first of May—We i e Brown and I sit opposite one another all day authorizing (N.B. an s. instead of a z would give a different meaning) He is at present writing a Story of an old Woman who lived in a forest and to

<sup>1</sup> i.e. at Mrs. Millar's.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Lalor Sheil (1791–1851) whose play 'The Apostate' was produced at Covent Garden on the 3rd of May 1817. Sheil's 'Evadne', the tragedy here referred to, was first given at Covent Garden on the 10th of February 1819. Keats went to see it and criticizes it later in this letter.

<sup>3</sup> 'Switzerland', performed at Drury Lane 15 February 1819.

<sup>4</sup> See Letter 94, note, p. 236.

<sup>5</sup> 'The Examiner', 14 February 1819, pp. 108–9. Actually it was Lamb's essay on 'Valentine's Day', afterwards reprinted in the 'Essays of Elia', 1823.

whom the Devil or one (of) his Aid de feus came one night very late and in disguise. The old Dame sets before him pudding after pudding—mess after mess—which he devours and moreover casts his eyes up at a side of Bacon hanging over his head and at the same time asks whether her Cat is a Rabbit. On going he leaves her three pips of eve's apple<sup>1</sup>—and some how she, having liv'd a virgin all her life, begins to repent of it and wishes herself beautiful enough to make all the world and even the other world fall in love with her. So it happens—she sets out from her smoaky Cottage in magnificent apparel; the first city she enters eve(r)y one falls in love with her—from the Prince to the Blacksmith. A young gentleman on his way to the church to be married leaves his unfortunate Bride and follows this nonsuch. A whole regiment of soldiers are smitten at once and follow her. A whole convent of Monks in corpus christi procession join the Soldiers. The Mayor and Corporation follow the same road. Old and young, deaf and dumb—all but the blind are smitten and form an immense concourse of people who—what Brown will do with them I know not. The devil himself falls in love with her flies away with her to a desert place—in consequence of which she lays an infinite number of Eggs. The Eggs being hatched from time to time fill the world with many nuisances such as John Knox—George Fox—Johanna Southcote—Gifford. There have been within a fortnight eight failures of the highest consequence in London—Brown went a few evenings since to Davenport's,<sup>2</sup> and on his coming in he talk'd about bad news in the City with such a face, I began to think of a national Bankruptcy. I did not feel much surprised—and was rather disappointed. Carlisle<sup>3</sup>, a Bookseller on the Hone principle has been issuing Pamphlets from his shop in fleet Street called the Deist—he was conveyed to Newgate last Thursday—he intends making his own defence. I was surprised to hear from Taylor the amount of Mur(r)ay

<sup>1</sup> Cf. verses on p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> There can be no doubt that this is Bridge, or Burrigge, Davenport, of Church Row, Hampstead, and merchant of 3 Dunster Court, Mincing Lane. He and his family appear again in this letter, pp. 309, 312, and 318, and in Letter 174, p. 458. It was to Davenport Keats sent the copy of 'Lamia' in which he denounced the 'Advertisement',—"This is none of my doing—I was ill at the time", and when he had read it again his indignation roused him to add below, 'This is a lie'.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Carlile (1790–1843), arrested Thursday, 11 Feb. 1819.

the Booksellers last sale—what think you of 25,000? He sold 4000 coppies of Lord Byron. I am sitting opposite the Shakspeare I brought from the Isle of wight—and I never look at it but the silk tassels<sup>1</sup> on it give me as much pleasure as the face of the Poet itself—except that I do not know how you are going on. In my next packet as this is one by the ~~by~~ way, I shall send you the Pot of Basil, S<sup>t</sup> Agnes eve, and if I should have finished it a little thing call'd the 'eve of S<sup>t</sup> Mark' you see what fine mother Radcliff<sup>2</sup> names I have—it is not my fault—I did not search for them—I have not gone on with Hyperion—for to tell the truth I have not been in great cue for writing lately—I must wait for the sp⟨r⟩ing to rouse me up a little—The only time I went out from Bedhampton was to see a Chapel consecrated—Brown I and John Snook the boy,<sup>3</sup> went in a chaise behind a leaden horse Brown drove, but the horse did not mind him—This Chapel is built by a M<sup>r</sup> Way<sup>4</sup> a great Jew converter—who in that line has spent one hundred thousand Pounds. He maintains a great number of poor Jews—Of course his communion plate was stolen—he spoke to the Clerk about it—The Clerk said he was very sorry adding—'I dare shay your honour its among ush'. The Chapel is built in M<sup>r</sup> Way's park—

<sup>1</sup> The portrait had been decorated with silk tassels by his sister-in-law, before she left England.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 54, p. 113, for 'Damosel Radcliffe'.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. John Snook of Belmont Castle ('the boy') died on the 1st of February 1887.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Letter 111, p. 279. The consecration took place on the 25th of January. Lewis Way (1772–1840), on coming into a fortune, gave up the law and became a priest in 1817. He spent his money lavishly for the benefit of others and was not always rewarded with gratitude. Macaulay refers to another incident in his relations with the Jews in the lines—

'Each, says the Proverb, has his taste. 'Tis true.  
Marsh loves a controversy, Coates a play,  
Bennet a felon, Lewis Way a Jew,  
The Jew the silver spoons of Lewis Way.'

and Winthrop Mackworth Praed, in 'My Partner', writes—

'A Cockney muse? I mouthed a deal  
Of folly from Endymion;  
A Saint? I praised the pious zeal  
Of Way and Simeon.'

Way married Mary Drewe, of Broadhembury, Devon (possibly related to Mrs. Hamilton Reynolds). A pleasant portrait of him by John Downman appears in Mrs. Stirling's 'The Ways of Yesterday' (1930), which also contains an interesting account of this good man. Keats can have known little or nothing of him personally.



The Consecration was—not amusing—there were numbers of carriages, and his house crammed with Clergy—they sanctified the Chapel—and it being a wet day consecrated the burial ground through the vestry window. I begin to hate Parsons—they did not make me love them that day—when I saw them in their proper colours—A Parson is a Lamb in a drawing room and a lion in a Vestry. The notions of Society will not permit a Parson to give way to his temper in any shape—so he festers in himself—his features get a peculiar diabolical self sufficient iron stupid exp(r)ession. He is continually acting. His mind is against every Man and every Mans mind is against him. He is an Hippocrite to the Believer and a Coward to the unbeliever—He must be either a Knave or an Ideot. And there is no Man so much to be pitied as an ideot parson. The Soldier who is cheated into an esprit du corps—by a red coat, a Band and Colours for the purpose of nothing—is not half so pitiable as the Parson who is led by the nose by the Bench of Bishops—and is smothered in absurdities—a poor necessary subaltern of the Church<sup>1</sup>—

<sup>2</sup>*Friday Feb<sup>y</sup> 18.*—The day before yesterday I went to Romney Street—your Mother was not at home—but I have just written her that I shall see her on wednesday. I call'd on Mr Lewis<sup>3</sup> this morning—he is very well—and tells me not to be uneasy about Letters the chances being so arbitrary—He is going on as usual among his favorite democrat papers—We had a chat as usual about Cobbett: and the westminster electors. Dilke has lately been very much harrassed about the manner of educating his Son—he at length decided for a public school—and then he did not know what school—he at last has decided for Westminster; and as Charley is to be a day boy, Dilke will remove to Westminster. We lead very quiet lives here—Dilke is at present in greek histories and antiquit(i)es—and talks of nothing but the electors of Westminster and the retreat of the ten-thousand—I never drink now above three glasses of wine—and never any spirits and water. Though by the bye the other day—Woodhouse took me to his coffee house—and ordered a Bottle of Claret—now

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'The Merchant of Venice', iv. i. 55.

<sup>2</sup> 18 Feb. 1819 was a Thursday, but the reference on p. 302 to Charley Dilke's birthday, which was on 18 Feb. 1810, shows that Keats was writing on Friday, 19 Feb.

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 94, note, p. 236.

I like Claret—whenever I can have Claret I must drink it,—’tis the only palate affair that I am at all sensual in.<sup>1</sup> Would it not be a good Speck to send you some vine roots—could I(t) be done? I’ll enquire—If you could make some wine like Claret to drink on Summer evenings in an arbour! For really ’tis so fine—it fills the mouth one’s mouth with a gushing freshness—then goes down cool and feverless—then you do not feel it quar(r)elling with your liver—no it is rather a Peace maker and lies as quiet as it did in the grape—then it is as fragrant as the Queen Bee; and the more ethereal Part of it mounts into the brain, not assaulting the cerebral apartments like a bully in a bad-house looking for his trul and hurrying from door to door bouncing against the waistcoat; but rather walks like Aladin about his own enchanted palace so gently that you do not feel his step. Other wines of a heavy and spirituous nature transform a Man to a Silenus; this makes him a Hermes—and gives a Woman the soul and im(m)ortality of Ariadne for whom Bacchus always kept a good cellar of claret—and even of that he could never persuade her to take above two cups—I said this same Claret is the only palate-passion I have I forgot game—I must plead guilty to the breast of a Partridge, the back of a hare, the backbone of a grouse, the wing and side of a Pheasant and a Woodcock *passim*. Talking of game (I wish I could make it) the Lady whom I met at Hastings and of whom I said something in my last I think,<sup>2</sup> has lately made me many presents of game, and enabled me to make as many—She made me take home a Pheasant the other day which I gave to Mr<sup>s</sup> Dilke; on which, tomorrow, Rice, Reynolds and the Wentworthians will dine next door—The next I intend for your Mother. These moderate sheets of paper are much more pleasant to write upon than those large thin sheets which I hope you by this time have received—though that cant be now I think of it—I have not said in any Letter yet a word about my affairs—in a word I am in no despair about them—my poem has not at all succeeded—in the course of a year or so I think I shall try the public again—in a selfish point of view I should suffer my pride and my contempt of public opinion to hold me silent—but for your’s and fanny’s sake I will pluck up a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ‘Ode to a Nightingale’, stanza 2.

<sup>2</sup> Actually the last but one. See Letter 94, pp. 238–9.

spirit and try again. I have no doubt of success in a course of years if I persevere—but it must be patience—for the Reviews have enervated and made indolent mens minds—few think for themselves—These Reviews too are getting more and more powerful and especially the Quarterly. They are like a superstition which the more it prostrates the Crowd and the longer it continues the more powerful it becomes just in proportion to their increasing weakness—I was in hopes that when people saw, as they must do now, all the trickery and iniquity of these Plagues they would scout them, but no they are like the spectators at the Westminster cock-pit—they like the battle and do not care who wins or who looses. Brown is going on this morning with the story of his old woman and the Devil—He makes but slow progress—The fact is it is a Libel on the Devil and as that person is ~~the~~ Brown's Muse, look ye, if he libels his own Muse how can he expect to write—Either Brown or his muse must turn tale—Yesterday was Charley Dilkes birth day. Brown and I were invited to tea. During the evening noth(i)ng passed worth notice but a little conversation between M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke and M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne.—The subject was the watchman. It was ten o'Clock and M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne who lived during the summer in Brown's house and now lives in the Road, recognized her old Watchman's voice and said that he came as far as her now: 'indeed' said M<sup>rs</sup> D. 'does he turn the Corner?' There have been some Letters pass between me and Haslam: but I have not seen him lately—the day before yesterday—which I made a day of Business, I call'd upon him—he was out as usual—Brown has been walking up and down the room a breeding—now at this moment he is being delivered of a couplet—and I dare say will be as well as can be expected—Gracious—he has twins! I have a long Story to tell you about Bailey—I will say first the circumstances as plainly and as well as I can remember and then I will make my comment. You know that Bailey was very much cut up about a little Jilt in the country somewhere; I thought he was in a dying state about it when at Oxford with him: little supposing as I have since heard, that he was at that very time making impatient Love to Marian Reynolds—and guess my astonishment at hearing after this that he had been trying at Miss Martin—So matters have been. So Matters stood—when he got ordained and

went to a Curacy near Carlisle where the family of the Gleigs reside—There his susceptible heart was conquered by Miss Gleig—and thereby all his connections in town have been annulled both male and female—I do not now remember clearly the facts—These however I know—He showed his correspondence with Marian to Gleig—re-tu(r)nd all her Letters and asked for his own—he also wrote very abrupt Letters to Mr<sup>s</sup> Reynolds—I do not know any more of the Martin affair<sup>1</sup> than I have written above—No doubt his conduct has been very bad. The great thing to be considered is—whether it is want of delicacy and principle or want of Knowledge and polite experience—And again Weakness—yes that is it—and the want of a Wife—yes that is it—and then Marian made great Bones of him, although her Mother and Sister have teased her very much about it. Her conduct has been very upright throughout the whole affair—She liked Bailey as a Brother—but not as a Husband—especially as he used to woo her with the Bible and Jeremy Taylor under his arm—they walked in no grove but Jeremy Taylors<sup>2</sup>—Marian's obstinacy is some excuse—but his so quickly taking to miss Gleig can have no excuse—except that of a Ploughmans who wants a wife—The thing which sways me more against him than any thing else is Rice's conduct on the occasion; Rice would not make an immature resolve: he was ardent in his friendship for Bailey; he examined the whole for and against minutely; and he has abandoned Bailey entirely. All this I am not supposed by the Reynoldses to have any hint of—It will be a good Lesson to the Mother and Daughters—nothing would serve but Bailey—If you mentioned the word Tea pot some one of them came out with an a propos about Bailey—noble fellow—fine fellow! was always in their mouths—this may teach them that the man who ridicules romance is the most romantic of Men—that he who abuses women and slights them—loves them the most—that he who talks of roasting a Man alive would not do it when it came to the push—and above all that they are very shallow people who take every thing literally. A Man's life of any worth is a continual allegory—and very few eyes can see the Mystery of his life—a life like the scriptures, figurative—

<sup>1</sup> See Benjamin Bailey in Biographical Memoranda.

<sup>2</sup> 'Golden Grove' (1655), a devotional manual by Taylor.

which such people can no more make out than they can the hebrew Bible. Lord Byron cuts a figure—but he is not figurative—Shakspeare led a life of Allegory: his works are the comments on it—

March 12 Friday—I went to ~~town~~<sup>1</sup> town yesterday chiefly for the purpose of seeing some young Men who were to take some Letters for us to you—through the medium of Peachey. I was surprised and disappointed at hearing they had changed their minds and did not purpose going so far as Birkbeck's<sup>2</sup>—I was much disappointed; for I had counted upon seeing some persons who were to see you—and upon your seeing some who had seen me—I have not only lost this opportunity—but the sail of the Post-Packet to new york or Philadelphia—by which last your Brothers<sup>3</sup> have sent some Letters—The weather in town yesterday was so stifling that I could not remain there though I wanted much to see Kean in Hotspur—I have by me at present Hazlitt's Letter to Gifford<sup>4</sup>—perhaps you would like an extract or two from the high seasond parts. It begins thus. "Sir, You have an ugly trick of saying what is not true of any one you do not like; and it will be the object of this Letter to cure you of it. You say what you please of others; it is time you were told what you are. In doing this give me leave to borrow the familiarity of your style:—for the fidelity of the picture I shall be answerable. You are a little person but a considerable cat's paw; and so far worthy of notice. Your clandestine connection with persons high in office constantly influences your opinions and alone gives importance to them. You are the government critic, a character nicely of differing from that of a government spy—the invisible link, that connects literature with the Police." Again—"Your employers M<sup>r</sup> Gifford, do not pay their hirelings for nothing—for condescending to notice weak and wicked sophistry; for pointing out to contempt what excites no admiration; for cautiously selecting a few specimens of bad taste and bad grammar where nothing else

<sup>1</sup> A week later Keats made the same mistake, without correcting it: see p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letters 113, p. 282, and 116, p. 285, also this letter, p. 295.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. Georgiana's brothers.

<sup>4</sup> 'A Letter to William Gifford Esq.' (1819). There is another edition dated 1820; and extracts from the work, are appended to Leigh Hunt's poem 'Ultra-Crepidarius' (1823).

is to be found. They want your invincible pertness, your mercenary malice, your impenetrable dullness, your bare-faced impudence, your pragmatism self-sufficiency, your hypocritical zeal, your pious frauds to stand in the gap of their Prejudices and pretensions, to fly blow and taint public opinion, to defeat independent efforts, to apply not the touch of the scorpion but the touch of the Torpedo to youthful hopes, to crawl and leave the slimy track of sophistry and lies over every work that does not 'dedicate its sweet leaves'<sup>1</sup> to some Luminary of the tre(a)sury bench, or is not fostered in the hot bed of corruption. This is your office; "this is what is look'd for at your hands and this you do not baulk"<sup>2</sup>—to sacrifice what little honesty and prostitute what little intellect you possess to any dirty job you are commission'd to execute. "They keep you as an ape does an apple in the corner of his jaw, first mouth'd to be at last swallow'd"<sup>3</sup>—You are by appointment literary toad-eater to greatness and taster to the court—You have a natural aversion to whatever differs from your own pretensions, and an acquired one for what gives offence to your superiors. Your vanity panders to your interest, and your malice truckles only to your love of Power. If your instinctive or premeditated abuse of your enviable trust were found wanting in a single instance; if you were to make a single slip in getting up your select committee of enquiry and green bag report of the state of Letters, your occupation would be gone. You would never after obtain a squeeze of the hand from a great man, or a smile from a Punk of Quality. The great and powerful (whom you call wise and good) do not like to have the privacy of their self love startled by the obtrusive and unmanageable claims of Literature and Philosophy, except through the intervention of people like you, whom, if they have common penetration, they soon find out to be without any superiority of intellect; or if they do not whom they can despise for their meanness of soul. You "have the office opposite to saint Peter"<sup>4</sup> you "keep a corner in the public mind, for foul prejudice and corrupt power to knot and gender in";<sup>5</sup> you volunteer your services to people of quality to ease scruples of mind and qualms of conscience;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Romeo and Juliet', I. i. 157-8.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Twelfth Night', III. ii. 26-7.

<sup>4</sup> 'Othello', IV. ii. 90.

<sup>3</sup> 'Hamlet', IV. ii. 19, 20.

<sup>5</sup> 'Othello', IV. ii. 61.

you lay the flattering unction<sup>1</sup> of venal prose and laurell'd verse to their souls—You persuade them that there is neither purity of morals, nor depth of understanding except in themselves and their hangers on; and would prevent the unhallow'd names of Liberty and humanity from ever being whispered in years *(sic)* polite! You, sir, do you not all this? I cry you mercy then: I took you for<sup>2</sup> the Editor of the Quarterly Review!" This is the sort of feu de joie he keeps up—there is another extract or two—one especially which I will copy tomorrow—for the candles are burnt down and I am using the wax taper—which has a long snuff on it—the fire is at its last click—I am sitting with my back to it with one foot rather askew upon the rug and the other with the heel a little elevated from the carpet—I am writing this on the Maid's tragedy which I have read since tea with Great pleasure—Besides this volume of Beaumont & Fletcher<sup>3</sup>—there are on the tabl(e) two volumes of chaucer and a new work of Tom Moores call'd 'Tom Cribb's memorial to Congress'<sup>4</sup>—nothing in it—These are trifles—but I require nothing so much of you as that you will give me a like description of yourselves, however it may be when you are writing to me—Could I see the same thing done of any great Man long since dead it would be a great delight: as to know in what position Shakspeare sat when he began 'To be or not to be'—such thing(s) become interesting from distance of time or place. I hope you are both now in that sweet sleep which no two beings deserve more than *(for than)* you do—I must fancy you so—and please myself in the fancy of speaking a prayer and a blessing over you and your lives—God bless you—I whisper good night in your ears and you will dream of me.

*Saturday 13 March.* I have written to Fanny<sup>5</sup> this morning; and received a note from Haslam. I was to have dined with him to morrow: he give(s) me a bad account of his Father who has not been in Town for 5 weeks—and is not well enough for company—Haslam is well—and from the prosperous state of some love affair he does not mind the double tides he has to work—I have been a Walk past

<sup>1</sup> 'Hamlet', III. iv. 145.

<sup>2</sup> 'Othello', IV. ii. 87–8.

<sup>3</sup> In which he wrote the ode 'Bards of Passion and of Mirth' and 'Spirit here that reignest'.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Letter 172, 17 Jan. 1820, and note.

<sup>5</sup> i.e. Letter 116.

westend—and was going to call at M<sup>r</sup> Monkhouse's—but I did not, not being in the humour—I know not why Poetry and I have been so distant lately I must make some advances soon or she will cut me entirely. Hazlitt has this fine Passage in his Letter: Gifford, in his Review of Hazlitt's characters of Shakspeare's plays, attacks the Coriolanus critique—He says that Hazlitt has slandered Shakspeare in saying that he had a leaning to the arbitrary side of the question. Hazlitt thus defends himself "My words are "Coriolanus is a storehouse of political commonplaces. The Arguments for and against aristocracy and d(e)mocracy, on the Privileges of the few and the claims of the many, on Liberty and slavery, power and the abuse of it, peace and war, are here very ably handled, with the spirit of a poet and the acuteness of a Philosopher. Shakspeare himself seems to have had a leaning to the arbitrary side of the question, perhaps from some feeling of contempt for his own origin, and to have spared no occasion of bating the rabble. *What he says of them is very true; what he says of their betters is also very true, though he dwells less upon it.*" I then proceed to account for this by showing how it is that "the cause of the people is but little calculated for a subject for Poetry; or that the language of Poetry naturally falls in with the language of power." I affirm, Sir, that Poetry, that the imagination, generally speaking, delights in power, in strong excitement, as well as in truth, in good, in right, whereas pure reason and the moral sense approve only of the true and good. I proceed to show that this general love or tendency to immediate excitement or theatrical effect, no matter how produced, gives a Bias to the imagination often (in)consistent with the greatest good, that in Poetry it triumphs over Principle, and bribes the passions to make a sacrifice of common humanity. You say that it does not, that there is no such original Sin in Poetry, that it makes no such sacrifice or unworthy compromise between poetical effect and the still small voice of reason—And how do you prove that there is no such principle giving a bias to the imagination, and a false colouring to poetry? Why by asking in reply to the instances where this principle operates, and where no other can with much modesty and simplicity—"But are these the only topics that afford delight in Poetry &c" No; but these objects do afford delight in poetry, and they afford



it in proportion to their strong and often tragical effect, and not in proportion to their strong and often tragical effect,<sup>1</sup> and not in proportion to the good produced, or their desireableness in a moral point of view? "Do we read with more pleasure of the ravages of a beast of prey than of the Shepherd's pipe upon the Mountain?" No but we do read with pleasure of the ravages of a beast of prey, and we do so on the principle I have stated, namely from the sense of power abstracted from the sense of good; and it is the same principle that makes us read with admiration and reconciles us in fact to the triumphant progress of the conquerors and mighty Hunters of mankind, who come to stope the shepherd's Pipe upon the Mountains and sweep away his listening flock. Do you mean to deny that there is any thing imposing to the imagination in power, in grandeur, in outward shew, in the accumulation of individual wealth and luxury, at the expense of equal justice and the common weal? Do you deny that there is anything in the "Pride, Pomp and Circumstance of glorious war, that makes ambition virtue!"<sup>2</sup> in the eyes of admiring multitudes? Is this a new theory of the Pleasures of the imagination, which says that the pleasures of the imagination do not take rise soly in the calculations of the understanding? Is it a paradox of my creating that "one murder makes a villain millions a Hero!"<sup>3</sup> or is it not true that here, as in other cases, the enormity of the evil overpowers and makes a convert of the imagination by its very magnitude? You contradict my reasoning, because you know nothing of the question, and you think that no one has a right to understand what you do not. My offence against purity in the passage alluded to, "which contains the concentrated venom of my malignity," is, that I have admitted that there are tyrants and slaves abroad in the world; and you would hush the matter up, and pretend that there is no such thing in order that there may be nothing else. Farther I have explained the cause, the subtle sophistry of the human mind, that tolerates and pampers the evil in order to guard against its approaches; you would conceal the cause in order to prevent the cure, and to leave the proud flesh about the heart to harden and ossify into one impenetrabl(e) mass of selfishness and

<sup>1</sup> Keats's slip in copying.

<sup>2</sup> 'Othello', III. iii. 355, 351.

<sup>3</sup> Beilby Porteus (1731-1808), 'Death', l. 155.

hypocrisy, that we may not "sympathise in the distresses of suffering virtue" in any case in which they come in competition with the fictitious wants and "imputed weaknesses of the great." You ask "are we gratified by the cruelties of Domitian or Nero?" No not we—they were too petty and cowardly to strike the imagination at a distance; but the Roman senate tolerated them, addressed their perpetrators, exalted them into gods, the fathers of the people, they had pimps and scribblers of all sorts in their pay, their Senecas, &c. till a turbulent rabble thinking that there were no injuries to Society greater than the endurance of unlimited and wanton oppression, put an end to the farce and abated the nuisance as well as they could. Had you and I lived in those times we should have been what we are now, I<sup>1</sup> "a sour mal content," and you "a sweet courtier." <sup>1</sup> The manner in which this is managed: the force and innate power with which it yeasts and works up itself—the feeling for the costume of society; is in a style of genius—He hath a demon as he himself says of Lord Byron—We are to have a party this evening. The Davenports from Church row<sup>2</sup>—I dont think you know any thing of them—they have paid me a good deal of attention. I like Davenport himself—The names of the rest are Miss Barnes Miss Winter with the Children.<sup>3</sup>

On Monday we had to dinner Severn and Cawthorn, the Bookseller and print-virtuoso; in the evening Severn went home to paint and we other three went to the play, to see Sheil's<sup>4</sup> new tragedy ycleped Evadne. In the morning Severn and I took a turn round the Museum—there is a Sphinx there of a giant size, and most voluptuous Egyptian expression, I had not seen it before. The play was bad even in comparison with 1818, the Augustan age of the Drama, 'Comme on sait', as Voltaire says—the

<sup>1</sup> Keats puts a double line in the margin against this passage.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 298, note. The Children would include Margaret Davenport and her sister; see 'Letters of Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats', Oxford University Press, 1936, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> At this point there is a break in the manuscript arising from the fact that Keats overlooked a sheet when he dispatched the budget to his brother and sister-in-law. Fortunately, however, some sort of transcript was made by Mr. Jeffrey, and from that the missing passage can be tolerably well restored. Keats ultimately discovered his omission, and sent the omitted sheet on with another batch, having first added an explanatory paragraph under a new date, as will be seen later (see p. 312).

<sup>4</sup> See p. 297, n. 2. Jeffrey wrote 'Sheilds'.

whole was made up of a virtuous young woman, an indignant brother, a suspecting lover, a libertine prince, a gratuitous villain, a street in Naples, a Cypress grove, lillies and roses, virtue and vice,<sup>1</sup> a bloody sword, a spangled jacket, one Lady Olivia, one Miss O'Neil<sup>2</sup> alias Evadné, alias Bellamira, alias—(Alias—Yea and I say unto you a greater than Elias—there was Abbot,<sup>3</sup> and talking of Abbot his name puts me in mind of a Spelling book lesson, descriptive of the whole *Dramatis personae*—Abbot—Abbess—Actor—Actress—). The play is a fine amusement as a friend of mine once said to me—"Do what you will," says he, "a poor gentleman who wants a guinea cannot spend his two shillings better than at the playhouse." The pantomime was excellent, I had seen it before and enjoyed it again—Your Mother and I had some talk about Miss H.—. Says I, Will Henry have that Miss H. a lath with a boddice, she who has been fine drawn—fit for nothing but to cut up into Cribbage pins, to the tune of 15-2; one who is all muslin; all feathers and bone; once in travelling she was made use of as a lynch pin; I hope he will not have her, though it is no uncommon thing to be *smitten with a staff*; though she might be very useful as his walking stick, his fishing rod, his tooth-pic—his hat stick (she runs so much in his head) let him turn farmer, she would cut into hurdles; let him write poetry she would be his turnstyle; Her gown is like a flag on a pole; she would do for him if he turn freemason; I hope she will prove a flag of truce; when she sits languishing with her one foot on a stool, and one elbow on the table, and her head inclined, she looks like the sign of the crooked billet—or the frontispiece to Cinderella or a teapaper wood cut of Mother Shipton at her studies; she is a make-believe—(She is bon a side a thin young 'oman—) But this is mere talk of a fellow creature; yet pardie I would not that Henry have her—(Non volo ut eam possideat, nam, for it would be a bam, for it would be a sham—)

Don't think I am writing a petition to the Governors of St. Luke's<sup>4</sup>—no, that would be in another style. May it please your Worships; forasmuch as the undersigned has

<sup>1</sup> Anticipating Swinburne's notorious lines.

<sup>2</sup> Eliza O'Neil (1791–1872).

<sup>3</sup> William Abbot (1789–1843), actor and dramatist.

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke's Hospital, which Lamb suggested for Coleridge and Edward Irving.

committed, transferred, given up, made over, consigned, and aberrated himself, to the art and mystery of poetry; for as much as he hath cut, rebuffed, affronted, huffed, and shirked, and taken stint, at all other employments, arts, mysteries, and occupations honest, middling and dishonest; for as much as he hath at sundry times, and in diverse places, told truth unto the men of this generation, and eke to the women, moreover, for as much as he hath kept a pair of boots that did not fit, and doth not admire Sheil's play, (Leigh Hunt,) Tom Moore, Rob Southey and Mr Rogers; and does admire W<sup>m</sup>. Hazlitt; more overer for as more, as he liketh half of Wordsworth, and none of Crabbe; more over-est for for as most; as he hath written this page of penmanship—he prayeth your Worships to give him a lodging—Witnessed by R<sup>d</sup> Abbey & Co. cum familiaribus & Consanguiniis (signed) Count de Cockaigne—

The nothing of the day is a Machine called the Velocipede.<sup>1</sup> It is a wheel-carriage to ride cock horse upon, sitting astride and pushing it along with the toes, a rudder wheel in hand—they will go seven miles an hour. A handsome gelding will come to eight guineas, however they will soon be cheaper, unless the army takes to them. I look back upon the last month, and find nothing to write about, indeed I do not recollect one thing particular in it. It's all alike, we keep on breathing. The only amusement is a little scandal of however fine a shape, a laugh at a pun—and then after all we wonder how we could enjoy the scandal, or laugh at the pun.

I have been at different times turning it in my head whether I should go to Edinburgh and study for a physician; I am afraid I should not take kindly to it, I am sure I could not take fees. And yet I should like to do so; it is not worse than writing poems, and hanging them up to be fly-blown on the Reviewshambles. Every body is in his own mess. Here is the parson at Hampstead<sup>2</sup> quarrelling with all the world, he is in the wrong by this same token; when the black Cloth was put up in the Church for the Queen's mourning,<sup>3</sup> he asked the workmen to

<sup>1</sup> See 'Gentleman's Magazine', 1819; February, p. 176, 'Pedestrian Hobby Horse'; March, p. 271, 'Velocipede', put down by the Magistrates of Police 'on account of the crowded state of the metropolis'.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Samuel White (1765–1841), Vicar of Hampstead from 1807 to 1841; buried with his wife in the catacombs under the church.

<sup>3</sup> Queen Charlotte had died on the 17th November 1818.

hang it the wrong side outwards, that it might be better when taken down, it being his perquisite—Parsons will always keep up their Character, but as it is said there are some animals, the Ancients knew, which we do not, let us hope our posterity will miss the black badger with tri-cornered hat; Who knows but some Revisor of Buffon or Pliny, may put an account of the parson in the Appendix; No one will then believe it any more than we believe in the Phoenix. I think we may class the lawyer in the same natural history of Monsters; a green bag will hold as much as a lawn sleeve. The only difference is that the one is fustian, and the other flimsy; I am not unwilling to read Church history—at present and have Milner<sup>1</sup> in my eye his is reckoned a very good one.

18<sup>th</sup> September (1820). In looking over some of my papers, I found the above specimen of my carelessness. It is a sheet you ought to have had long ago my letter must have appeared very unconnected, but as I number the sheets you must have discovered how the mistake happened. how many things have happened since I wrote it. How have I acted contrary to my resolves; The interval between writing this sheet, and the day I put this supplement to it, has been completely filled with generous and most friendly actions of Brown towards me. How frequently I forget to speak of things, which I think of and feel most. 'Tis very singular, the idea about Buffon, above, has been taken up by Hunt in the Examiner, in some papers which he calls 'A Preternatural History.'<sup>2</sup>

(*Marc*)h 17<sup>th</sup>. Wednesday—On Sunday I went to Davenport's<sup>3</sup> w(h)ere I dined—and had a nap. I cannot bare a day an(ni)hilated in that manner—there is a great difference between an easy and an uneasy indolence<sup>4</sup>—An indolent day—fill'd with speculations even of an unpleasant colour—is bearable and even pleasant alon(e)—when one's thoughts cannot find out any thing better in the world; and experience has told us that locomotion is no change: but to have nothing to do, and to be surrounded with unpleasant human identities<sup>5</sup>; who press

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Milner (1744–97) wrote a 'History of the Church of Christ' (1794–1812) which was completed by his brother Isaac Milner, Dean of Carlisle. Jeffrey wrote 'Milnes'.

<sup>2</sup> After this point the Harvard College holograph begins again.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 298, note.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Letter 48, p. 102.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Letters 86, p. 215 and 93, p. 227.

upon one just enough to prevent one getting into a lazy position; and not enough to interest or rouse one; is a capital punishment of a capital crime: for is not giving up, through good-nature, one's time to people who have no light and shade a capital crime? Yet what can I do?—they have been very kind and attentive to me. I do not know what I did on monday—nothing—nothing—nothing—I wish this was any thing extraordinary. Yesterday I went to town: I called on Mr Abbey; he began again (he has don(e) it frequently lately) (abou)t that (hat ma)king concern—saying he wish you had hea(rken)ed to it: he wants to make me a H(at-maker)—I really believe 'tis all interested: for from the manner he spoke withal and the card he gave me I think he is concerned in (Hat-ma)king himself.<sup>1</sup> He speaks well of Fanny('s) health—Hodgkinson is married—From this I think he takes a little Latitude—Mr A was waiting very impatient(l)y for his return to the counting house—and meanwhile observed how strange it was that Hodgkinson should have been not able to walk two months ago and that now he should be married.—“I do not”, says he ‘think it will do him any good: I should not be surprised if he should die of a consumption in a year or (two.) I called at Taylor's, and found that he and Hilton had set out to dine with me: so I followed them immediately back—I walk'd with them townwards again as far as Cambden Town and smook'd home<sup>2</sup> a Segar—This morning I have been reading the ‘False one’<sup>3</sup> I have been up to Mr<sup>s</sup> Bentley's—shameful to say I was in bed at ten—I mean this morning—The Blackwood's review has committed themselves in a scandalous heresy—they have been putting up Hogg the ettrick shepherd against Burns<sup>4</sup>—the senseless villains. I have not seen Reynolds Rice of (for or) any of our set lately—. Reynolds is completely buried in the law: he is not only reconcil'd to it but hobbyhorses upon it—Blackwood wanted very much to see him—the Scotch cannot manage by themselves at all—they want imagination—and that is why they are so fond of Hogg who has a little of it—

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 156, p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> ‘home’, very doubtful.

<sup>3</sup> By Beaumont and Fletcher, cf. p. 306.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Some Observations on the Poetry of the Agricultural and that of the Pastoral Districts of Scotland, illustrated by a Comparative View of the Genius of Burns and the Ettrick Shepherd.’—‘Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine’, February 1819, pp. 521–9.

*Friday 19<sup>th</sup>.* Yesterday I got a black eye—the first time I took a Cr<icket> bat. Brown who is always one's friend in a disaster <app>lied a le<ech to> the eyelid, and there is no infla<mm>ation this morning though the ball hit me <torn> on the sight—'twas a white ball. I am glad it was not a clout. This is the second black eye I have had since leaving school—during all my <scho>ol days I never had one at all—we must eat a peck before we die—This morning I am in a sort of temper indolent and supremely careless: I long after a stanza or two of Thompson's<sup>1</sup> Castle of indolence. My passions are all asleep from my having slumbered till nearly eleven and weakened the animal fibre all over me to a delightful sensation about three degrees on this side of faintness—if I had teeth of pearl and the breath of lillies I should call it langour—but as I am \*I must call it Laziness. In this state of effeminacy the fibres of the brain are relaxed in common with the rest of the body, and to such a happy degree that pleasure has no show of enticement and pain no unbearable frown. Neither Poetry, nor Ambition, nor Love<sup>2</sup> have any alertness of countenance as they pass by me: they seem rather like three figures on a greek vase—a Man and two women whom no one but myself could distinguish in their disguise<sup>3</sup>. This is the only happiness; and is a rare instance of advantage in the body overpowering the Mind. I have this moment received a note from Haslam in which he expects the death of his Father—who has been for some time in a state of insensibility—his mother bears up he says very well—I shall go to twon<sup>4</sup> tommorrow to see him. This is the world—thus we cannot expect to give way many hours to pleasure—Circumstances are like Clouds continually gathering and bursting—While we are laughing the seed of some trouble is put into the wide arable land of events—while we are laughing it sprouts is <for it> grows and suddenly bears a poison fruit which we must pluck—Even so we have leisure to reason on the misfortunes of our friends; our own touch us too nearly for words. Very few men have ever arrived at a complete

\* Especially as I have a black eye.

<sup>1</sup> For Thomson, see p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. l. 13 of Sonnet on p. 317.

<sup>3</sup> Compare this passage with the 'Ode on Indolence'.

<sup>4</sup> See note on p. 304.

disinterestedness of Mind: very few have been influenced by a pure desire of the benefit of others—in the greater part of the Benefactors of Humanity some meretricious motive has sullied their greatness—some melodramatic scenery has fascinated them—From the manner in which I feel Haslam's misfortune I perceive how far I am from any humble standard of disinterestedness—Yet this feeling ought to be carried to its highest pitch as there is no fear of its ever injuring Society—which it would do I fear pushed to an extremity—For in wild nature the Hawk would loose his Breakfast of Robins and the Robin his of Worms—the Lion must starve as well as the swallow. The greater part of Men make their way with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness as the Hawk. The Hawk wants a Mate, so does the Man—look at them both they set about it and procure on(e) in the same manner. They want both a nest and they both set about one in the same manner—they get their food in the same manner—The noble animal Man for his amusement smokes his pipe—the Hawk balances about the Clouds—that is the only difference of their leisures. This it is that makes the Amusement of Life—to a speculative Mind. I go among the Fields and catch a glimpse of a Stoat or a fieldmouse peeping out of the withered grass—the creature hath a purpose and its eyes are bright with it. I go amongst the buildings of a city and I see a Man hurrying along—to what? the Creature has a purpose and his eyes are bright with it. But then, as Wordsworth says, “we have all one human heart”<sup>1</sup>—there is an electric fire in human nature tending to purify—so that among these human creature(s) there is continu(a)lly some birth of new heroism. The pity is that we must wonder at it: as we should at finding a pearl in rubbish. I have no doubt that thousands of people never heard or have had hearts completely disinterested: I can remember but two—Socrates and Jesus—their Histories evince it. What I heard a little time ago, Taylor observe with respect to Socrates may be said of Jesus—That he was so great a man that though he transmitted no writing of his own to posterity, we have his Mind and his sayings and his greatness handed to us by others. It is to be lamented that the history of the latter was written and revised by

<sup>1</sup> ‘The Old Cumberland Beggar’, l. 153.



Men interested in the pious frauds of Religion. Yet through all this I see his splendour. Even here though I myself am pursuing the same instinctive course as the veriest human animal you can think of—I am however young writing at random—straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness—without knowing the bearing of any one assertion of any one opinion. Yet may I not in this be free from sin?<sup>1</sup> May there not be superior beings amused with any graceful, though instinctive attitude my mind may fall into, as I am entertained with the alertness of a Stoat or the anxiety of a Deer? Though a quarrel in the Streets is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine; the commonest Man shows a grace in his quarrel—By a superior being our reasoning may take the same tone—though erroneous they may be fine—This is the very thing in which consists poetry—and if so it is not so fine a thing as philosophy—For the same reason that an eagle is not so fine a thing as a truth—Give me this credit—Do you not think I strive—to know myself? Give me this credit—and you will not think that on my own account I repeat Milton's lines

“How charming is divine Philosophy  
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose  
But musical as is Apollo's lute”<sup>2</sup>

No—not for myself—feeling grateful as I do to have got into a state of mind to relish them properly—Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced—Even a Proverb is no proverb to you till your Life has illustrated it. I am ever afraid that your anxiety for me will lead you to fear for the violence of my temperament continually smothered down: for that reason I did not intend to have sent you the following sonnet—but look over the two last pages and

<sup>1</sup> The passage beginning ‘Even here’, punctuated as above as in the original in Harvard College Library, is by no means clear. In ‘The Times Literary Supplement’ of the 20th of May 1926, p. 339, Mr. L. J. Potts, of Queens’ College, Cambridge, drew attention to its obscurity as printed by Sir Sidney Colvin and H. Buxton Forman, and suggested a punctuation which certainly clarifies Keats’s meaning. Mr. Potts would read—‘Even here, though I myself am pursuing the same instinctive course as the veriest human animal you can think of—I am, however, young—writing at random, straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness, without knowing the bearing of any one assertion, of any one opinion—yet may I not in this be free from sin?’

<sup>2</sup> ‘Comus’, ll. 476–8.

ask yourselves whether I have not that in me which will well bear the buffets of the world. It will be the best comment on my sonnet; it will show you that it was written with no Agony but that of ignorance; with no thirst of any thing but Knowledge when pushed to the point though the first steps to it were through my human passions—they went away, and I wrote with my Mind—and perhaps I must confess a little bit of my heart—

Why did I laugh tonight? No voice will tell:  
 No God no Deamon of severe response  
 Deigns to reply from heaven or from Hell.—<sup>1</sup>  
 Then to my human heart I turn at once—  
 Heart! thou and I are here sad and alone;  
 Say, wherefore did I laugh? O mortal pain!  
 O Darkness! Darkness!<sup>2</sup> ever must I moan  
 To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain!<sup>1</sup>  
 Why did I laugh? I know this being's lease  
 My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads:  
 Yet could I on this very midnight cease<sup>3</sup>  
 And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds.  
 Verse, fame and Beauty are intense indeed  
 But Death intenser—Death is Life's high mead.”

I went to ~~head~~ bed, and enjoyed an uninterrupted Sleep  
 -Sane I went to bed and sane I ~~rose~~ arose.

This is the 15<sup>th</sup> of April—you see what a time it is since I wrote—all that time I have been day by day expecting Letters from you. I write quite in the dark—In the hopes of a Letter daily I have deferred that I might write in the light. I was in town yesterday and at Taylor's heard that young Birkbeck had been in Town and was to set forward in six or seven days—so I shall dedicate that time to making up this parcel ready for him. I wish I could hear from you to make me “whole and general as the casing air.”<sup>4</sup> A few days after the 19<sup>th</sup> of april<sup>5</sup> I received a note from Haslam containing the news of his father's death—The Family has all been well—Haslam has his father's situation. The Framptons have behaved well to him—The day before yesterday I went to a rout at Sawrey's<sup>6</sup>—it was

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Sonnet on p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 115, p. 284.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ‘Ode to a Nightingale’, l. 56.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Macbeth’, III. iv. 23, as on p. 77.

<sup>5</sup> He should have written ‘March’.

<sup>6</sup> The doctor who had attended Tom; see p. 73.

made pleasant by Reynolds being there, and our getting into conversation with one of the most beautiful Girls I ever saw—She gave a remarkable prettiness to all those commonplaces which most women who talk must utter—I liked M<sup>rs</sup> Sawrey very well. The Sunday before last your Brothers were to come by a long invitation—so long that for the time I forgot it when I promised M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne to dine with her on the same day—On recollecting my engagement with your Brothers I immediately excused myself with M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne but she would not hear of it and insisted on my bringing my friends with me. So we all dined at M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne's. I have been to M<sup>rs</sup> Bentley's this morning and put all the Letters two *<for to>* and from you and poor Tom and me—I have found some of the correspondence between him and that degraded Wells and Amena<sup>1</sup>—It is a wretched business. I do not know the rights of it—but what I do know would I am sure affect you so much that I am in two Minds whether I will tell you any thing about it—And yet I do not see why—for any thing tho' it be unpleasant that calls to mind those we still love, has a compensation in itself for the pain it occasions—so very likely tomorrow I may set about copying the whole of what I have about it: with no sort of a Richardson self satisfaction—I hate it to a sickness—and I am affraid more from indolence of mind than any thing else. I wonder how people exist with all their worries. I have not been to Westminster but once lately and that was to see Dilke in his new Lodgings—I think of living somewhere in the neighbourhood myself—Your mother was well by your Brother's account. I shall see her perhaps to-morrow—yes I shall—We have had the Boys here lately—they make a bit of a racket—I shall not be sorry when they go.<sup>2</sup> I found also this morning in a note from George to you my dear sister a lock of your hair which I shall this moment put in the miniature case. A few days ago Hunt dined here and Brown invited Davenport<sup>3</sup> to meet him. Davenport from a sense of weakness thought it incumbent on him to show off—and pursuant to that never ceased talking and boaring all day, till I was completely fagged out—Brown grew melancholy—but Hunt

<sup>1</sup> See Biographical Memoranda, under 'Thomas Keats' and pp. 324-5.

<sup>2</sup> Brown's nephews, mentioned again on p. 324.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 298, note.

perceiving what a complimentary tendency all this had bore it remarkably well—Brown grumbled about it for two or three days—I went with Hunt to Sir John Leicester's gallery there I saw Northcote—Hilton—Bewick<sup>1</sup> and many more of great and Little<sup>2</sup> note. Haydon's picture<sup>3</sup> is of very little progress this last year. He talks about finishing it next year—Wordsworth is going to publish a Poem called Peter Bell—what a perverse fellow it is! Why wilt he talk about Peter Bells—I was told not to tell—but to you it will not be tellings—Reynolds hearing that said Peter Bell was coming out, took it into his head to write a skit upon it call'd Peter Bell.<sup>4</sup> He did it as soon as thought on it is to be published this morning, and comes out before the real Peter Bell, with this admirable motto from the "Bold stroke for a Wife"<sup>5</sup> "I am the real Simon Pure" I<t> would be just as well to trounce Lord Byron in the same manner. I am still at a stand in versifying—I cannot do it yet with any pleasure—I mean however to look round at my resources and means—and see what I can do without poetry—To that end I shall live in Westminster—I have no doubt of making by some means a little to help on or I shall be left in the Lurch—with the burden of a little Pride—However I look in time—The Di<l>kes like their lodging in Westminster tolerably well. I cannot help thinking what a shame it is that poor Dilke should give up his comfortable house & garden for his Son, whom he will certainly ruin with too much care—The boy has nothing in his ears all day but himself and the importance of his education. Dilke has continually in his mouth "My Boy" This is what spoils princes: it may have the same effect with Commoners. M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke has been very well lately—But what a shameful thing it is that for that obstinate Boy Dilke should stifle himself in Town Lodgings and wear out his Life by his continual apprehension of his Boys fate in Westminster-school with the rest of the Boys and the Masters. Eve<r>y one has some wear and tear—One would think Dilke ought to be quiet and happy—but no—this one Boy makes his face pale, his society silent and

<sup>1</sup> William Bewick recalls this visit in a letter to William Davison, see Thomas Landseer's 'Life and Letters of William Bewick', 2 vols., London, 1871, ii. 169.

<sup>2</sup> See note, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> 'Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.'

<sup>4</sup> Published by Taylor and Hessey; it ran through three editions in 1819.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Centlivre (1667-1723).

his vigilance jealous—He would I have no doubt quarrel with any one who snubbd his Boy—With all this he has no notion how to manage him. O what a farce is our greatest cares! Yet one must be in the pother for the sake of Clothes food and Lodging. There has been a squabble between Kean and one M<sup>r</sup> Bucke—There are faults on both sides—on Bucks the faults are positive to the Question: Keans fault is a want of genteel knowledge and high Policy—The formor writes knavishly foolish and the other silly bombast. It was about a Tragedy written by said M<sup>r</sup> Bucke; which it appears M<sup>r</sup> Kean kick'd at—is (*for it*) was so bad— After a little struggle of M<sup>r</sup> Bucke's against Kean drury Lane had the policy to bring it on and Kean the impolicy not to appear in it—It was damn'd—The people in the Pit had a favourite call on the night of "Buck Buck rise up" and "Buck Buck how many horns do I hold up.<sup>1</sup> Kotzebue the German Dramatist and traitor to his country was murdered lately by a young student whose name I forget<sup>2</sup>—he stabbed himself immediately after crying out Germany! Germany! I was unfortunate to miss Richards the only time I have been for many months to see him. Shall I treat you with a little extempore.

When they were come unto the Faery's Court  
 They rang—no one at home—all gone to sport  
 And dance and kiss and love as faerys do  
 For Fa(e)ries be as humans lovers true—  
 Amid the woods they were so lone and wild  
 Where even the Robin feels himself exild  
 And where the very brooks as if affraid  
 Hurry along to some less magic shade.  
 'No one at home'! the fretful princess cry'd  
 'And all for nothing such a dre(a)ry ride  
 And all for nothing my new diamond cross  
 No one to see my persian feathers toss  
 No one to see my Ape my Dwarf, my Fool  
 Or how I pace my otahaietan mule—  
 Ape, Dwarf and Fool why stand you gaping there

<sup>1</sup> Charles Bucke (see p. 122), the author of 'The Italians; or the Fatal Accusation', gave his account of the affair in a long preface to that play as printed at the time (1819). The pit-call was derived from a game played by English and Colonial school-boys to this day.

<sup>2</sup> It was Carl Ludwig Sand. See p. 407.

Burst the door open, quick—or I declare,  
 I'll switch you soundly and in pieces tear.'  
 The Dwarf began to tremble and the Ape  
 Star'd at the Fool, the Fool was all agape  
 The Princess grasp'd her switch but just in time  
 The dwarf with piteous face began to rhyme.  
 'O mighty Princess did you never hear tell  
 What your poor servants know but too too well  
 Know you the three great crimes in faery land  
 The first alas! poor Dwarf I understand  
 I made a whipstock of a faery's wand  
 The next is snoring in their company  
 The next, the last the direst of the three  
 Is making free when they are not at home  
 I was a Prince—a baby prince—my doom  
 You see, I made a whipstock of a wand  
 My top has henceforth slept in faery land.  
 He was a Prince, the Fool a grown up Prince  
 But he has never been a King's son since  
 He fell a snoring at a faery Ball—  
 Your poor Ape was a Prince, and he poor thing  
 Picklock'd a faery's boudour—now no king  
 But ape—so pray your highness stay awhile  
 'Tis sooth indeed We know it to our sorrow—  
 Persist and *you* may be an ape tomorrow—  
 While the Dwarf spake the Princess all for spite  
 Peal'd the brown hazel twig to lilly white  
 Clench'd her small teeth, and held her lips apart  
 Try'd to look unconcern'd with beating heart  
 They saw her highness had made up her mind  
~~They quaver'd And quaver'd And quaver~~ing like the  
 reeds before the wind—  
 And they had had it, but O happy chance  
 The Ape for very fear began to dance  
 And grin'd as all his ugliness did ache—  
 She staid her vixen fingers for his sake,  
 He was so very ugly: then she took  
 Her pocket glass mirror and began to look  
 First at herself and <then> at him and then  
 She smil'd at her own beauteous face again.  
 Yet for all this—for all her pretty face—  
 She took it in her head to see the place  
 Women gain little from experience

Either in Lovers husbands or expence  
 The more their beauty, the more fortune too  
 Beauty before the wide world never knew  
 So each Fair reasons—tho' it oft miscarries.  
 She thought *her* pretty face would please the fa(e)ries  
 'My darling Ape I wont whip you today  
 Give me the Picklock sirrah and go play—  
 They all three wept—but counsel was as vain  
 As crying cup biddy to drops of rain.  
 Yet lingeringly did the sad Ape forth draw  
 The Picklock from the Pocket in his Jaw.  
 The Princess took it and dismounting straight  
 Trip'd in blue silver'd slippers to the gate  
 And touch'd the wards, the Door ~~opes~~ full cou(r)teou(s)ly  
 Opened—she enter'd with her servants three  
 Again it clos'd and there was nothing seen  
 But the Mule grasing on the herbage green.

## End of Canto xii

## Canto the xiii

The Mule no sooner saw himself alone  
 Than he prick(d) up his Ears—and said well done  
 At least unhappy Prince I may be free—  
 No more a Princess shall side saddle me  
 O King of Othaietè—tho a Mule  
 'Aye every inch a King'<sup>1</sup>—tho—'Fortune's fool'<sup>2</sup>  
 Well done—for by what M<sup>r</sup> Dwarfy said  
 I would not give a sixpence for her head'  
 Even as he spake he trotted in high glee  
 To the knotty side of an old Pollard tree  
 And rub('d) his sides against the mossed bark  
 Till his Girths burst and left him naked stark  
 Except his Bridle—how get rid of that  
 Buckled and tied with many a twist and plait  
 At last it struck him to pretend to sleep  
 And then the thievish Monkeys down would creep  
 And filch the unpleasant trammels quite away  
 No sooner thought of than adown he lay  
 Sham'd a good snore—the Monkey-men descended  
 And whom they thought to injure they befriended.  
 They hung his Bridle on a topmost bough  
 And of(f) he went run, trot, or any how—

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'King Lear', iv. vi. 110.<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Romeo and Juliet', iii. i. 142.

Brown is gone to bed—and I am tired of rhyming—there is a north wind blowing playing young gooseberry with the trees—I don't care so it helps even with a side wind a Letter to me—for I cannot put faith in any reports I hear of the Settlement some are good some bad—Last Sunday I took a Walk towards highgate and in the lane that winds by the side of Lord Mansfield's park I met M<sup>r</sup> Green our Demonstrator at Guy's<sup>1</sup> in conversation with Coleridge—I joined them, after enquiring by a look whether it would be agreeable—I walked with him a(t) his alderman-after-dinner pace for near two miles I suppose In those two Miles he broached a thousand things—let me see if I can give you a list—Nightingales, Poetry—on Poetical Sensation—Metaphysics—Different genera and species of Dreams—Nightmare—a dream accompanied ~~with~~ by a sense of touch—single and double touch—A dream related—First and second consciousness—the difference explained between will and Volition—so m(an)y metaphysicians from a want of smoking the second consciousness—Monsters—the Kraken—Mermaids—Southey believes in them—Southey's belief too much diluted—A Ghost story—Good morning—I heard his voice as he came towards me—I heard it as he moved away—I had heard it all the interval—if it may be called so. He was civil enough to ask me to call on him at Highgate Good Night! <sup>2</sup>It looks so much like rain I shall not go to town to day: but put it off till tomorrow—Brown this morning is writing some spenserian stanzas against M<sup>rs</sup> Miss Brawne and me; so I shall amuse myself with him a little: in the manner of Spenser—

He is to weet a melancholy Carle  
Thin in the waist, with bushy head of hair  
As hath the seeded thistle when in parle  
It holds the Zephyr ere it sendeth fair  
Its light balloons into the summer air  
Therto his beard had not began to bloom  
No brush had touch'd his chin or razor sheer  
No care had touch'(d) his cheek with mortal doom  
But new he was and bright as scarf from persian loom.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Henry Green (1791–1863), surgeon; twice President of College of Surgeons; president of Medical Council; friend and literary executor of Coleridge.

<sup>2</sup> Though the same paragraph is continued, what follows was begun with a fresh pen, and internal evidence indicates that it belongs to the next day.



Ne cared he for wine, or half and half  
 Ne cared he for fish or flesh or fowl  
 And sauces held he worthless as the chaff  
 He scorn'd 'sdeign'd the swine heard at the wassail bowl  
 Ne with lewd ribbalds sat he cheek by jowl  
 Ne with sly Lemans in the scorner's chair  
 But after water brooks this Pilgrim's soul  
 Panted, and all his food was woodland air  
 Though he would oftentimes feast on gilliflowers rare—

The slang of cities in no wise he knew  
*Tipping the wink* to him was he(a)then greek  
 He sipp'd no olden Tom or ruin blue  
 Or nantz or cheery brandy drank full meek  
 By many a Damsel hoarse and rouge of cheek  
 Nor did he know each aged Watchman's beat—  
 Nor in obscured perlieus would he seek  
 For curled Jewesses<sup>1</sup> with ankles neat  
 Who as they walk abroad make tinkling with their feet<sup>2</sup>—

This character would ensure him a situation in the establishment of patient Griselda—The servant has come for the little Browns this morning—they have been a toothache to me which I shall enjoy the riddance of—Their little voices are like wasps stings—'Some times am I all wound with Browns'.<sup>3</sup> We had a claret feast some little while ago—There were Dilke, Reynolds, Skinner, Mancur, John Brown, Martin, Brown and I—We all got a little tipsy—but pleasantly so—I enjoy Claret to a degree. I have been looking over the correspondence of the pretended Amena and Wells<sup>4</sup> this evening—I now see the whole cruel deception—I think Wells must have had an accomplice in it—Amena's Letters are in a Man's language, and in a Man's hand imitating a woman's—The instigations to this diabolical scheme were vanity, and the love of intrigue. It was no thoughtless hoax—but a cruel deception on a sanguine Temperament, with every show of friendship. I do not think death too bad for the villain—The world ~~will~~ would look upon it in a different light should I expose it—they would call it a frolic—so I must be wary—but I consider it my duty to be prudently

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Othello', I. ii. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Isaiah iii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'The Tempest', II. ii. 12, 13.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 318.

revengeful. I will hang over his head like a sword by a hair. I will be opium to his vanity—if I cannot injure his interests—He is a rat and he shall have ratsbane to his vanity—I will harm him all I possibly can—I have no doubt I shall be able to do so—Let us leave him to his misery alone, except when we can throw in a little more—The fifth canto of Dante pleases me more and more—it is that one in which he meets with Paulo and Francesca—I had passed many days in rather a low state of mind and in the midst of them I dreamt of being in that region of Hell. The dream was one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life—I floated about the whirling atmosphere as it is described with a beautiful figure to whose lips mine were joined at (*for as*) it seem'd for an age—and in the midst of all this cold and darkness I was warm—even flowery tree tops sprung up and we rested on them sometimes with the lightness of a cloud till the wind blew us away again—I tried a Sonnet upon it—there are fourteen lines but nothing of what I felt in it—O that I could dream it every night—

As Hermes once took to his feathers light  
 When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept  
 So on a delphic reed my idle spright  
 So play'd, so charm'd so conquer'd, so bereft  
 The dragon world of all its hundred eyes  
 And seeing it asleep so fled away:—  
 Not to pure Ida with its snow ~~and~~ cold skies,  
 Nor unto Tempe where Jove grieved that day,  
 But to that second circle of sad hell,  
 Where in the gust, the whirlwind and the flaw  
 Of Rain and hailstones lovers need not tell  
 Their sorrows—Pale were the sweet lips I saw  
 Pale were the lips I kiss'd and fair the form  
 I floated with about that melancholy storm—

I want very very much a little of your wit my dear Sister—a Letter or two of yours just to bandy back a pun or two across the Atlantic and send a quibble over the Floridas. Now you have by this time crumpled up your large Bonnet, what do you wear—a cap? do you put your hair in papers of a night? do you pay the Miss Birkbeck's a morning visit—have you any tea? or to (*for do*) you milk and water with them—What place of Worship do you go to—the

Quakers the Moravians, the Unitarians or the Methodists—Are there any flowers in bloom you like—any beautiful heaths—any Streets full of Corset Makers. What sort of shoes have you to fit those pretty feet of yours? Do you desire Comp<sup>ts</sup> to one another? Do you ride on Horseback? what do you have for breakfast, dinner and supper? without mentioning lunch and bever<sup>t</sup> and wet and snack and a bit to stay one's Stomach—Do you get any Spirits—now you might easily distill some whiskey—and going into the woods set up a whiskey spop (*for* shop) for the Monkeys. Do you and the miss Birkbecks get groggy on any thing—a little so so ish so as to be obliged to be seen home with a Lantern—You may perhaps have a game at puss in the corner—Ladies are warranted to play at this game though they have not whiskers. Have you a fiddle in the Settlement—or at any rate a jew's harp—which will play in spite of one's teeth—When you have nothing else to do for a whole day I tell you how you may employ it—First get up and when you are dress'd, as it would be pretty early, with a high wind in the woods give George a cold Pig<sup>2</sup> with my Compliments. Then you may saunter into the nearest coffeehouse and after taking a dram and a look at the chronicle—go and frighten the wild boars upon the strength—you may as well bring one home for breakfast serving up the hoofs garnished with bristles and a grunt or two to accompany the singing of the Kettle—then if George is not up give him a colder Pig always with my Compliments—When you are both set down to breakfast I advise you to eat your full share—but leave off immediately on feeling yourself inclined to any thing on the other side of the puffy—avoid that for it does not become young women—After you have eaten your breakfast keep your eye upon dinner—it is the safest way—You should keep a Hawk's eye over your dinner and keep hovering over it till due time then pounce taking care not to break any plates—While you are hovering with your dinner in p(r)ospect you may do a thousand things—put a hedgehog into Georges hat—pour a little water into his rifle—soak his boots in a pail of water—cut his jacket round into shreds like a roman kilt or the back of my grandmothers stays—Sow *off* his buttons

<sup>1</sup> A snack between meals. .

<sup>2</sup> i.e. a wetting with cold water to awaken him.

Yesterday I could not write a line I was so fatigued for the day before I went to town in the morning called on your Mother, and returned in time for a few friends we had to dinner. There were Taylor Woodhouse, Reynolds—we began cards at about 9 o’Clock, and the night coming on and continuing dark and rainy they could not think of returning to town—So we played at Cards till very daylight—and yesterday I was not worth a sixpence—Your mother was very well but anxious for a Letter. We had half an hours talk and no more for I was obliged to be home. Mr<sup>s</sup> and Miss Millar were well—and so was Miss Waldegrave—I have asked your Brothers here for next Sunday—When Reynolds was here yeste on Monday—he asked me to give Hunt a hint to take notice of his Peter Bell<sup>1</sup> in the Examiner—the best thing I can do is to write a little notice of it myself which I will do here and copy it out if it should suit my Purpose—

*Peter Bell* There have been lately advertized two Books bothe Peter Bell by name; what stuff the one was made of might be seen by the motto, ‘I am the real Simon Pure’. This false florimel<sup>2</sup> has hurried from the press and obtruded herself into public notice while for ought we know the real one may be still wandering about the woods and mountains. Let us hope she may soon ~~make her appearance~~ and make good her right to the magic girdle. The Pamphleteering Archimage we can perceive has rather a splenetic love than a downright hatred to real florimels—if indeed they ~~sing~~ had been so christened—or had even a pretention to play at bob cherry with Barbara Lewthwaite: but ~~the rest are me~~ he has a fixed aversion to those three rhyming Graces Alice Fell, Susan Gale and Betty Foy; and ~~who can wonder at it?~~ and now at length especially to Peter Bell—fit Apollo. ~~The writer of this little skit from understanding~~ It may be seen from one or two Passages of in this little Skit, that the writer of it has felt the finer parts of Mr Wordsworths Poetry, and perhaps expatiated with his more remote and sublimer muse; ~~who sits aloof in a cheerful sadness, and~~ This as far as it relates to Peter Bell is unlucky. The more he may love the sad

<sup>1</sup> See p. 319. The review was printed with some slight changes in ‘The Examiner’ for the 25th of April 1819; the modified version may be found in volume iii of Messrs. Gowans and Gray’s edition of Keats’s works. It was partly this that led Shelley to write ‘Peter Bell the Third’.

<sup>2</sup> Spenser, ‘Faerie Queene’, Books III, IV, V.

embroidery<sup>1</sup> of the Excursion; the more he will hate the coarse Samplers of Betty Foy and Alice Fell; and as they come from the same hand, the better will be able to imitate that which can be imitated—to wit Peter Bell—as far as can be imagined from the obstinate Name—We repeat, it is very unlucky—this real Simon Pure is in parts the very Man—there is a pernicious likeness in the scenery a ‘pestilent humour’ in the rhymes and an inveterate cadence in some of the Stanzas that must be lamented. If we are one part ~~pleased~~ amused at this we are three parts sorry that an appreciator of Wordsworth should show so much temper at this really provoking name of Peter Bell—! This will do well enough—I have copied it and enclosed it to Hunt. You will call it a little politic—seeing I keep clear of all parties. I say something for and against both parties—and suit it to the tune of the examiner—I mean to say I do not unsuit it—and I believe I think what I say nay I am sure I do—I and my conscience are in luck to day—which is an excellent thing—The other night I went to the Play with Rice, Reynolds and Martin—we saw a new dull and half damn’d Opera<sup>2</sup> call’d ‘the heart of Mid Lothian’ that was on Saturday—I stopt at Taylors on Sunday with Woodhouse—and passed a quiet Sort of pleasant day. I have been very much pleased with the Panorama of the Ships at the north Pole<sup>3</sup>—with the icebergs, the Mountains, the Bears the Walrus—the seals the Penguins—and a large whale floating back above water—it is impossible to describe the place—Wednesday Evening—

La belle dame sans merci—

O what can ail thee Knight at arms  
 Alone and palely loitering?  
 The sedge has withered from the Lake  
 And no birds sing!  
 O what can ail thee Knight at arms  
 So haggard, and so woe begone?  
 The Squirrel’s granary is full  
 And the harvest’s done.

<sup>1</sup> See ‘Lycidas’, l. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted by Daniel Terry (1780?–1829), actor and playwright, and produced at Covent Garden on the 17th of April 1819. The music was arranged by Bishop (1786–1855).

<sup>3</sup> In April 1819 John Franklin was about to start on an Arctic expedition. The Panorama was exhibited in Leicester Square.

I see ~~death's~~ a lilly on thy brow  
 With anguish moist and fever dew,  
 And on thy cheeks ~~death's~~ a fading rose  
 Fast Withereth too—

I met a Lady in the ~~Wilds~~ Meads  
 Full beautiful, a faery's child  
 Her hair was long, her foot was light  
 And her eyes were wild—

I made a Garland for her head,  
 And bracelets too, and fragrant Zone  
 She look'd at me as she did love  
 And made sweet moan—

I set her on my pacing steed—  
 And nothing else saw all day long  
 For sidelong would she bend and sing  
 A faerys song—

She found me roots of relish sweet  
 And honey wild and ~~honey~~ manna dew  
 And sure in language strange she said  
 I love thee true—

She took me to her elfin grot  
 And there she wept { and sigh'd full sore  
                                   ~~and there she sighed full~~  
                                   ~~sore~~  
 And there I shut her wild wild eyes  
 With Kisses four. \

And there she lulled me asleep  
 And there I dream'd Ah Woe betide!  
 The latest dream I ever dreamt  
 On the cold hill side

I saw pale Kings and Princes too  
 Pale warriors death pale were they all  
 They cried La belle dame sans merci  
 Thee hath in thrall.



Let me see the myriad shapes  
 Of Men and Beasts and Fish and apes  
 Portray'd in many a fiery den,  
 And wrought by spumy bitumen  
 On the deep intenser roof  
 Arched every way aloof.  
 Let me breathe upon my Skies  
 And anger their live tapestries  
 Free from cold and every care  
 Of chilly rain and shivring air.

## Zephyr.

Spright of fire—away away!  
 Or your very roundelay  
 Will scar my plumage ~~all~~ newly budded  
 From its quilled sheath ~~and~~ all studded  
 With the selfsame dewes that fell  
 On the May-grown Asphodel.  
 Spright of fire away away!

## Brema.

Spright of fire away away!  
 Zephyr blue eyed faery turn  
 And see my cool sedge shaded urn  
 Where it rests its mossy brim  
 Mid water mint and cresses dim  
~~Where~~ And the flowers ~~amid~~ in sweet troubles  
 Lift their eyes above the bubbles  
 Like our Queen when she would please  
 To sleep and Oberon will tease.  
 Love me blue eyed Faery true  
~~For in~~ soothly I am sick for you.

## Zephyr.

Gentle Brema by the first  
 Violet young nature nurst  
 I will bathe myself with thee  
 So you sometime follow me  
 To my home far far in west  
~~Far beyond the~~  
 Far beyond the search and quest



Of the golden browed sun—  
 Come with me oer tops of trees  
 To my fragrant Pallaces  
 Where they ever floating are  
 Beneath the cherish of a star  
~~Who with~~ Call'd Vesper—who with silver veil  
 Ever Hides ~~his brightness~~ his brilliance pale  
 Ever gently drows'd doth keep  
 Twilight of the Fays to sleep  
 Fear not that your watry hair  
 Will thirst in drouthy ringlets there—  
 Clouds of stored summer rains  
 Thou shalt taste before the stains  
 Of the mountain soil they take  
 And too unlucent for thee make  
 I love thee ch⟨r⟩ystal faery true  
 Sooth I am as sick for you

## Salam—

Out ye agueish Faeries out!  
~~Chillier than the water~~  
 Chilly Lovers what a rout,  
 Keep ye with your frozen breath  
 Colder than the mortal death—  
 Adder-eyed Dusketha, speak  
 Shall we leave these ~~sp~~ and go seek  
 In the Earths wide Entrails old  
 Couches warm as theirs is cold  
 O for a fiery gloom and thee  
 Dusketha so enchantingly  
 Freck⟨l⟩e-wing'd and lizard-sided!

## Dusketha

By thee Spright will I be guided  
 I ~~to~~ care not for cold or heat  
 Frost and and Flame or Sparks or sleet  
 To my essence are the same—  
 But I honor more the flame—  
 Spright of fire I follow thee  
 Wheresoever it m⟨a⟩y be,  
 To the ~~very fire~~ torrid spouts ⟨and⟩ fountains  
 Underneath earth quaked mountains

Or at thy supreme desire  
 Touch the very pulse of fire  
 With my bare unlidded eyes

Salam—

Sweet Dusketha: Paradise!  
 Off ye icy Spirits—fly  
 Frosty creatures of <the> Sky.

Dusketha

Breathe upon them fiery Spright

Zephyr Breama to each other  
 let us fly

Ah, ~~my love, my life~~  
 Away Away to our delight

Salam

Go feed on icicles ~~will we~~ while we  
 Bedded in tongued flames will be

Dusketha

Lead me to those fevrous glooms  
 Spright of fire

Breama

Me to the blooms

~~Soft~~ Blue eyed Zephyr of those flowers  
 Far in the west w(h)ere the May cloud lours  
 And the beams of still vesper, where winds are all wist  
 Are shed through the rain and the milder mist  
 And twilight your floating bowers—

I have been reading lately two very different books, Robertson's *America* and Voltaire's *Siecle De Louis XIV.*<sup>1</sup> It is like walking arm and arm between Pizarro and the great-little Monarch. In How lementable a case do we see the great body of the people in both instances: in the first, where Men might seem to inherit quiet of Mind from unsophisticated senses; from uncontamination of civilisation; and especially from their being as it were estranged

<sup>1</sup> 'Siècle de Louis XIV (Voltaire) 12 mo 5 vols.' appears in Charles Brown's list of Keats's books, but not Robertson's 'America'.

from the mutual helps of Society and its mutual injuries—and thereby more immediately under the Protection of Providence—even there they had mortal pains to bear as bad; or even worse than Ba*(i)*liffs, Debts and Poverties of civilised Life—The whole appears to resolve into this—that Man is originally ‘a poor forked creature’<sup>1</sup> subject to the same mischances as the beasts of the forest, destined to hardships and disquietude of some kind or other. If he improves by degrees his bodily accom*(m)*odations and comforts—at each stage, at each accent *(for ascent)* there are waiting for him a fresh set of annoyances—he is mortal and there is still a heaven with its Stars above his head. The most interesting question that can come before us is, How far by the persevering endeavours of a seldom appearing Socrates Mankind may be made happy—I can imagine such happiness carried to an extreme—but what must it end in?—Death—and who could in such a case bear with death—the whole troubles of life which are now frittered away in a series of years, would the*(n)* be accumulated for the last days of a being who instead of hailing its approach, would leave this world as Eve left Paradise—But in truth I do not at all believe in this sort of perfectibility—the nature of the world will not admit of it—the inhabitants of the world will correspond to itself. Let the fish Philosophise the ice away from the Rivers in winter time and they shall be at continual play in the tepid delight of Summer. Look at the Poles and at the Sands of Africa, Whirlpools and volcanoes—Let men exterminate them and I will say that they may arrive at earthly Happiness—The point at which Man may arrive is as far as the paral*(l)*el state in inanimate nature and no further—For instance suppose a rose to have sensation, it blooms on a beautiful morning it enjoys itself—but there comes a cold wind, a hot sun—it cannot escape it, it cannot destroy its annoyances—they are as native to the world as itself: no more can man be happy in spite, the worldly elements will prey upon his nature—The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is ‘a vale of tears’ from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven—What a little circumscribed straightened notion! Call the world if you Please “The vale of Soul-making”. Then you will

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ‘King Lear’, III. iv. 110, 111.

find out the use of the world (I am speaking now in the highest terms for human nature admitting it to be immortal which I will here take for granted for the purpose of showing a thought which has struck me concerning it) I say 'Soul making' Soul as distinguished from an Intelligence—There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions—but they are not Souls ~~the~~ till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself. I(n)teligences are atoms of perception—they know and they see and they are pure, in short—they are God—how then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them—so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each ones individual existence? How, but by the medium of a world like this? This point I sincerely wish to consider because I think it a grander system of salvation than the chrystiain religion—or rather it is a system of Spirit-creation—This is effected by three grand materials acting the one upon the other for a series of years. These three Materials are the *Intelligence*—the *human heart* (as distinguished from intelligence or Mind) and the *World* or *Elemental space* suited for the proper action of *Mind and Heart* on each other for the purpose of forming the *Soul* or *Intelligence destined to possess the sense of Identity*. I can scarcely express what I but dimly perceive—and yet I think I perceive it—that you may judge the more clearly I will put it in the most homely form possible—I will call the *world* a School instituted for the purpose of teaching little children to read—I will call the *human heart* the *horn Book* used in that School—and I will call the *Child able to read*, the *Soul* made from that *School* and its *hornbook*. Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways. Not merely is the Heart a Hornbook, It is the Minds Bible, it is the Minds experience, it is the teat from which the Mind or intelligence sucks its identity. As various as the Lives of Men are—so various become their Souls, and thus does God make individual beings, Souls, Identical Souls of the Sparks of his own essence—This appears to me a faint Sketch of a system of Salvation which does not affront our reason and humanity—I am convinced that many difficulties which christians labour under would vanish before it—there is one which even

now Strikes me—the Salvation of Children—In them the Spark or intelligence returns to God without any identity—it having had no time to learn of and be altered by the heart—or seat of the human Passions—It is pretty generally suspected that the chr(i)stian scheme has been copied from the ancient persian and greek Philosophers. Why may they not have made this simple thing even more simple for common apprehension by introducing Mediators and Personages in the same manner as in the he(a)then mythology abstractions are personified—Seriously I think it probable that this System of Soul-making—may have been the Parent of all the more palpable and personal Schemes of Redemption, among the Zoroastrians the Christians and the Hindoos. For as one part of the human species must have their carved Jupiter; so another part must have the palpable and named Mediator<sup>1</sup> and Saviour, their Christ their Oromanes<sup>2</sup> and their Vishnu—If what I have said should not be plain enough, as I fear it may not be, I will but *(for put)* you in the place where I began in this series of thoughts—I mean, I began by seeing how man was formed by circumstances—and what are circumstances?—but touchstones of his heart?—? and what are touchstones? but proofings of his heart? and what are proofings of his heart but fortifiers or alterers of his nature? and what is his altered nature but his Soul?—and what was his Soul before it came into the world and had these provings and alterations and perfectionings?—An intelligence—without Identity—and how is this Identity to be made? Through the medium of the Heart? And how is the heart to become this Medium but in a world of Circumstances?<sup>3</sup> There now I think what with Poetry and Theology you may thank your Stars that my pen is not very long winded—Yesterday I received two Letters from your Mother and Henry which I shall send to young Birkbeck with this—

Friday—April 30—Brown has been here rummaging up some of my old sins—that is to say sonnets. I do not think you remember them so I will copy them out as well as two or three lately written—I have just written one on

<sup>1</sup> Keats wrote 'Mediation' and altered the *n* to *r* without deleting the preceding *i*.

<sup>2</sup> In 1819 J. R. Planché produced an Easter piece at Drury Lane founded on one of the Tales of the Genii and called 'Abudah, or The Talisman of Oromanes'.



To Sleep<sup>1</sup>

O soft embalmer of the still midnight !  
 Shutting with careful fingers and benign  
 Our gloom-pleas'd eyes embowered from the light,  
 Enshaded in forgetfulness divine—  
 O soothest sleep, if so it please the(e) close  
 In midst of this thine hymn my willing eyes,  
 Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws  
 Around my bed its dewy Charities—  
 Then save me or the passed day will shine  
 Upon my pillow breeding many woes.  
 Save me from curious conscience that still lords  
 Its strength for darkness, borrowing like ~~the~~ a Mole—  
 Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards  
 And seal the hushed Casket of my soul.

The following Poem—the last I have written is the first and the only one with which I have taken even moderate pains. I have for the most part dash'd of(f) my lines in a hurry. This I have done leisurely—I think it reads the more richly for it and will I hope encourage me to write other thing(s) in even a more peac(e)able and healthy spirit. You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apulieus the Platonist who lived after the A(u)gustan age, and consequently the God-

<sup>1</sup> The peculiarity of the rhyme system of this sonnet, the sestet opening with rhymes to the close of the first quatrain and beginning of the second, indicates clearly that this is one of the experiments Keats mentions immediately after the 'Ode to Psyche' (p. 340). In the last edition of Keats's letters my father edited he took some trouble to perfect this sonnet. He had no doubt on re-examination of the holograph that Keats had written out for his brother the version given above, but unfortunately he had mistaken the last word of the eleventh line for *lord*, followed by a dash. Mr. Frederick Page, who first collated Lord Crewe's holograph letter for me, pointed out, however, that the word is '*lords*' and that what my father interpreted as a dash is really an imperfect 's' over which adheres a tiny flake of paper but which is clearly legible through the paper from the other side. My father's advocacy of '*hoards*' vice '*lords*', supported by the Woodhouse transcript from some other manuscript of Keats, is justifiable enough; and the idea of substituting '*tressed day*' for '*passed day*' in the ninth line, which he also urged, was derived from the incomplete draft in the copy of 'Milton' given by Keats to Mr. and Mrs. Dilke. Although he then declared that both words, '*hoards*' and '*tressed*', 'should unhesitatingly be adopted in the final text', it is right to add that when he was working on the 'Oxford' edition of Keats's Poetical Works, published in 1906, he reverted to the reading he had printed in his library edition of 1883 from the manuscript in Sir Charles Dilke's copy of 'Endymion', which gives '*passed*' and '*lords*', and also '*burrowing*' instead of '*borrowing*' in the twelfth line.

dess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervour—and perhaps never thought of in the old religion—I am more orthodox that *(for than)* to let a he(a)then Goddess be so neglected—

*Ode to Psyche—*

O Goddess hear these tuneless numbers, wrung  
 By sweet enforcement, and remembrance dear,  
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung  
 Even ~~to~~ into thine own soft-chonched ear!  
 Surely I dreamt today; or did I see  
 The winged Psyche, with awaked eyes?  
 I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,  
 And on the sudden, fainting with surprise,  
 Saw two fair Creatures couched side by side  
 In deepest grass beneath the whisp'ring fan  
 Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran  
 A Brooklet scarce espied  
 'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant eyed,  
 Blue, freckle-pink, and budded Syrian  
 They lay, calm-breathing on the bedded grass:  
 Their arms embraced and their pinions too;  
 Their lips touch'd not, but had not bid adieu,  
 As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,  
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber,  
 At tender eye dawn of aurorian love.  
 The winged boy I knew:  
 But who wast thou O ~~p~~—happy happy dove?  
 His Psyche true?

O latest born, and loveliest vision far  
 Of all Olympus faded Hierarchy!  
 Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,  
 Or Vesper amorous glow worm of the sky;  
 Fairer than these though Temple thou hadst none,  
 Nor Altar heap'd with flowers;  
 Nor virgin choir to make delicious moan  
 Upon the midnight hours;  
 No voice, no lute, no pipe no incense sweet  
 From chain-swung Censer teeming  
 No shrine, no grove, no Oracle, no heat  
 Of pale-mouth'd Prophet dreaming!



O Bloomiest! though too late for antique vows;  
 Too, too late for the fond believing Lyre,  
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,  
 Holy the Air, the water and the fire:  
 Yet even in these days so far retir'd  
 From happy Pieties, thy lucent fans,  
 Fluttering among the faint Olympians,  
 I see, and sing by my own eyes inspired.  
 O let me be thy Choir and make a moan  
 Upon the midnight hours;  
 Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet  
 From swung Censer teeming;  
 Thy Shrine, thy Grove, thy Oracle, thy heat  
 Of pale-mouth'd Prophet dreaming!  
 Yes I will be thy Priest and build a fane  
 In some untrodden region of my Mind,  
 Where branched thoughts new grown with pleasant pain,  
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind.  
 Far, far around shall those dark cluster'd trees  
 Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep,  
 And there by Zephyrs, streams and birds and bees  
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be ~~charm'd~~ lull'd to sleep.  
 And in the midst of this wide-quietness  
 A rosy Sanctuary will I dress  
 With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain;  
 With buds and bells and stars without a mane;<sup>1</sup>  
 With all the gardener fancy e'er could ~~frame~~ feign  
 Who breeding flowers will never breed the same—  
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight  
 That shadowy thought can win;  
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night  
 To let the warm Love in.

Here endethe y<sup>e</sup> Ode to Psyche.

Incipit altera Sonnetta.

I have been endeavouring to discover a better Sonnet Stanza than we have. The legitimate does not suit the language over-well from the pouncing rhymes—the other kind appears too elegiac<sup>2</sup>—and the couplet at the end of

<sup>1</sup> But 'name' in the quarto holograph and in the 1820 volume.

<sup>2</sup> He wrote 'elegiac' and struck out the last *a* instead of the first.

it has seldom a pleasing effect—I do not pretend to have succeeded—it will explain itself—

If by dull rhymes our english must be chained  
 And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet,  
 Fetterd, in spite of pained Loveliness;  
 Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,<sup>1</sup>  
 Sandals more interwoven and complete  
 To fit the naked foot of Poesy;  
 Let us inspect the Lyre and weigh the stress  
 Of every chord and see what may be gained  
 By ear industrious and attention meet,  
 Misers of sound and syllable, no less  
 Than Midas of his coinage, let us be  
 Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath Crown;  
 So if we may not let the Muse be free,  
 She will be bound with Garlands of her own.

Here endeth the other Sonnet—this is the 3<sup>d</sup> of May and everything is in delightful forwardness; the violets are not withered, before the peeping of the first rose; You must let me know every thing, how parcels go and come, what papers you have, and what Newspapers you want, and other things. God bless you my dear Brother and Sister

Your ever Affectionate Brother  
 John Keats—

124. To WILLIAM HASLAM. *Thursday 13 May 1819.*

*Address:* Mr W<sup>m</sup> Haslam | Frampton & Co. | Leadenhall Street.<sup>2</sup>

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and MY 13 1819. 12 o'Clock N<sup>n</sup>.

My dear Haslam,

We have news at last—and tolerably good too all considered—they have not gone to the Settlement—they are

<sup>1</sup> The holograph ends with this line; the rest of the letter is from the Jeffrey version.

<sup>2</sup> This address suggests the explanation of Keats's statements that the Framptons behaved well to Haslam after his father's death, and that he had got his father's situation (p. 317). It would seem that father and son were both employed by a firm of Framptons in Leadenhall Street. 'Frampton & Co.' I have not traced; but old directories reveal the existence of Frampton and Sons, wholesale grocers and tea-dealers of 34 Leadenhall Street; and, as Richard Abbey was in that line of business, Keats's acquaintance with Haslam would thus be accounted for: see Letter 94, p. 229.

both in good Health. I read the letter to Mr<sup>s</sup> Wylie to day and requested her after her Sons had read it—they would enclose it to you immediately which was faithfully promised. Send it me like Lightning that I may take it to Walthamstow.

Yours ever and Amen  
John Keats

125. To FANNY KEATS. *Thursday 13 May 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow.

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and MY 13 1819 EV

My dear Fanny,

I have a Letter from George at last—and it contains, considering all things, good news—I have been with it to day to Mr<sup>s</sup> Wylie's, with whom I have left it. I shall have it again as soon as possible and then I will walk over and read it to you. They are quite well and settled tolerably in comfort after a great deal of fatigue and harrass. They had the good chance to meet at Louisville with a School-fellow of ours.<sup>1</sup> You may expect me within three days. I am writing to night several notes concerning this to many of my friends.<sup>2</sup> Good night! god bless you.

John Keats —

126. To FANNY KEATS. *Wednesday 26 May 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 26 MY 1819.

My dear Fanny,

I have been looking for a fine day to pass at Walthamstow: there has not been one Morning (except Sunday and then I was obliged to stay at home) that I could depend upon. I have I am sorry to say had an accident with the Letter—I sent it to Haslam and he returned it torn into a thousand pieces. So I shall be obliged to tell

<sup>1</sup> Charles Briggs, now a merchant of New Orleans, see p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> As far as I am aware, this and Letter 124 are all of the 'several notes' which have as yet come to the surface; but it is possible that others may be extant, and will be brought to light sooner or later.

126. I have not come upon anything explanatory of Haslam's treatment of the letter entrusted to him by his friend. Nevertheless, despite this incident and another contretemps about a letter in August (see p. 375), Keats in November was ready to borrow money from him and in January 1820 wrote of him as 'a very good fellow indeed' who 'has been excessively anxious and kind to us', see Letters 164 and 172, pp. 438, 449.

you all I can remember from Memory. You would have heard from me before this, but that I was in continual expectation of a fine Morning—I want also to speak to you concerning myself. Mind I do not purpose to quit England, as George (h)as done; but I am affraid I shall be forced to take a voyage or two. However we will not think of that for some Months—Should it be a fine morning tomorrow you will see me.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

127. To MISS JEFFREY. *Monday 31 May 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Jeffry (resident) | Teignmouth | Devon.

*Postmarks:* SO HAMPSTEAD and 31 MY 1819

C. Brown Esq<sup>re</sup>

Wentworth Place—Hampstead—

My dear Lady,

I was making a day or two ago a general conflagration of all old Letters and Memorandums, which had become of no interest to me—I made however, like the Barber-inquisitor in Don Quixote some reservations—among the rest your and your Sister's Letters. I assure you you had not entirely vanished from my Mind, or even become shadows in my remembrance: it only needed such a memento as your Letters to bring you back to me. Why have I not written before? Why did I not answer your Honiton Letter? I had no good news for you—every concern of ours, (ours I wish I could say) and still I must say *ours*—though George is in America and I have no Brother left. Though in the midst of my troubles I had no relation except my young Sister I have had excellent friends. M<sup>r</sup> B. at whose house I now am invited me,—I have been with him ever since. I could not make up my mind to let you know these things. Nor should I now—but see what a little interest will do—I want you to do me a Favor; which I will first ask and then tell you the reasons. Enquire in the Villages round Teignmouth if there is any Lodging commodious for its cheapness; and let me know where it is and what price. I have the choice as it were of two Poisons (yet I ought not to call this a Poison) the one

is voyaging to and from India for a few years;<sup>1</sup> the other is leading a fevrous life alone with Poetry—This latter will suit me best; for I cannot resolve to give up my Studies.

It strikes me it would not be quite so proper for you to make such inquiries—so give my love to your Mother and ask her to do it. Yes, I would rather conquer my indolence and strain my nerves at some grand Poem—than be in a dunderheaded indiaman—Pray let no one in Teignmouth know any thing of this. Fanny must by this time have altered her name—perhaps you have also—are you all alive? Give my Comp<sup>ts</sup> to M<sup>rs</sup>—your Sister. I have had good news, (tho' 'tis a queerish world in which such things are call'd good) from George—he and his wife are well. I will tell you more soon—Especially dont let the Newfoundland fisherman know it—and especially no one else. I have been always till now almost as careless of the world as a fly—my troubles were all of the Imagination—My Brother George always stood between me and any dealings with the world. Now I find I must buffet it—I must take my stand upon some vantage ground and begin to fight—I must choose between despair & Energy—I choose the latter—though the world has taken on a quakerish look with me, which I once thought was impossible—

'Nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendour in the grass and glory in the flower.'<sup>2</sup>

I once thought this a Melancholist's dream—

But why do I speak to you in this manner? No believe me I do not write for a mere selfish purpose—the manner in which I have written of myself will convince you. I do not do so to Strangers. I have not quite made up my mind. Write me on the receipt of this—and again at your Leisure; between whiles you shall hear from me again—

Your sincere friend

John Keats

<sup>1</sup> The idea was to become a surgeon on a ship trading to the East Indies, an idea possibly derived from Haydon's medical adviser, Dr. Darling, who had held such an appointment: it was revived later, see Letter 212 to Dilke, written some four months before Keats left for Italy.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Wordsworth, 'Ode on Immortality', ll. 181–2.

128. To MISS JEFFREY. *Wednesday 9 June 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Jeffrey | Teignmouth.

*Postmark:* 9 JU 1819.

Wentworth Place.

My Dear young Lady,

I am exceedingly obliged by your two letters—Why I did not answer your first immediately was that I have had a little aversion to the South of Devon from the continual remembrance of my Brother Tom. On that account I do not return to my old Lodgings in Hampstead though the people of the house have become friends of mine—This however I could think nothing of, it can do no more than keep one's thoughts employed for a day or two. I like your description of Bradley very much and I dare say shall be there in the course of the summer; it would be immediately but that a friend<sup>1</sup> with ill health and to whom I am greatly attached call'd on me yesterday and proposed my spending a Month with him at the back of the Isle of Wight. This is just the thing at present—the morrow will take care of itself—I do not like the name of Bishop's Teigntown<sup>2</sup>—I hope the road from Teignmouth to Bradley does not lie that way—Your advice about the Indian is a very wise advice, because it just suits me, though you are a little in the wrong concerning its destroying the energies of Mind: on the contrary it would be the finest thing in the world to strengthen them—To be thrown among people who care not for you, with whom you have no sympathies forces the Mind upon its own resources, and leaves it free to make its speculations of the differences of human character and to class them with the calmness of a Botanist. An Indian is a little world. One of the great reasons that the English have produced the finest writers in the world is, that the English world has ill-treated them during their lives and foster'd them after their deaths. They have in general been trampled aside into the bye paths of life and seen the festerings of Society. They have not been treated like the Raphaels of Italy.

<sup>1</sup> James Rice, of whose ill health when in the Isle of Wight with him Keats wrote in Letter 135, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> Bishopsteignton—generally spelt in one word—is on the old road to Kingsteignton and Newton Abbot. Bradley and its beautiful woods lie a little to the west of Newton. If Miss Jeffrey had suggested a stay at Bradley, she knew how to choose a spot for a poet.—H.B.F.

And where is the Englishman and Poet who has given a magnificent Entertainment at the christening of one of his Hero's Horses as Boyardo did? He had a Castle in the Appenine. He was a noble Poet of Romance; not a miserable and mighty Poet of the human Heart.<sup>1</sup> The middle age of Shakespeare was all clouded over; his days were not more happy than Hamlet's who is perhaps more like Shakspeare himself in his common every day Life than any other of his Characters—Ben Johnson was a common Soldier and in the Low countries, in the face of two armies, fought a single combat with a french Trooper and slew him—For all this I will not go on board an Indiaman, nor for example's sake run my head into dark alleys: I dare say my discipline is to come, and plenty of it too. I have been very idle lately, very averse to writing; both from the overpowering idea of our dead poets and from abatement of my love of fame. I hope I am a little more of a Philosopher than I was, consequently a little less of a versifying Pet-lamb.<sup>2</sup> I have put no more in Print or you should have had it. You will judge of my 1819 temper when I tell you that the thing I have most enjoyed this year has been writing an ode to Indolence. Why did you not make your long-haired sister put her great brown hard fist to paper and cross your Letter? Tell her when you write again that I expect chequer-work—My friend Mr Brown is sitting opposite me employed in writing a Life of David.<sup>3</sup> He reads me passages as he writes them stuffing my infidel mouth as though I were a young rook—Infidel Rooks do not provender with Elisha's Ravens. If he goes on as he has begun your new Church had better not proceed, for parsons will be superseded—and of course the Clerks must follow. Give my love to your Mother with the assurance that I can never forget her anxiety for my Brother Tom. Believe also that I shall ever remember our leave-taking with *you*.

Ever sincerely yours

John Keats.

<sup>1</sup> Matteo Maria Boiardo (1434-94). Charles Brown translated his 'Orlando Innamorato': forty-eight stanzas of Canto I were printed in 'The West of England Magazine', November 1838, pp. 161-71.

<sup>2</sup> 'A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!'—'Ode on Indolence', vi. 4.

<sup>3</sup> 'A scandalous one,' says Mr. Blunden, 'possibly a counterblast to Smart's "Song to David" just then republished' by Rodwell and Martin.'

129. To FANNY KEATS. *Wednesday 9 June 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R. Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 9 JU 1819.

Wentworth Place.

My dear Fanny,

I shall be with you next monday at the farthest. I could not keep my promise of seeing you again in a week because I am in so unset(t)led a state of mind about what I am to do. I have given up the Idea of the Indiaman; I cannot resolve to give up my favorite Studies: so I purpose to retire into the Country and set my Mind at work once more. A Friend of Mine who has an ill state of health called on me yesterday and proposed to spend a little time with him at the back of the Isle of Wight where he said we might live very cheaply. I agreed to his proposal. I have taken a great dislike to Town I never go there—some one is always calling one (for on) me and as we have spare beds they often stop a couple of days. I have written lately to some Acquaintances in Devonshire concer(n)ing a cheap Lodging and they have been very kind in letting me know all I wanted.<sup>1</sup> They have described a pleasant place which I think I shall eventually retire to. How came you on With my young Master Yorkshire Man? Did not M<sup>rs</sup> A. sport her Carriage and one? They really surprised me with super civility—how did M<sup>rs</sup> A. manage it? How is the old tadpole gardener and little Master next door? it is to be hop'd they will both die some of these days. Not having been to Town I have not heard whether M<sup>r</sup> A. purposes to retire from business. Do let me know if you have heard any thing more about it. I(f) he should not I shall be very disappointed. If any one deserves to be put to his shifts it is that Hodgkinson. As for the other he would live a long time upon his fat and be none the worse for a good long lent. How came milidi to give one Lisbon wine—had she drained the Gooseberry? Truly I cannot delay making another visit—asked to take Lunch, whether I will have ale, wine take su r gar,—objection to green—like cream—thin bread and butter—another cup—agreeable—enough sugar—little more cream—too weak—12 shillin & &c &c lord I must come again

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letters 127 and 128.



We are just going to Dinner. I must must<sup>1</sup> with this to the Post—

Your affectionate Brother  
John—

130. To JAMES ELMES. *Saturday* (12 June 1819).

*No address or postmark.*

Wentworth Place Hampstead—

Sir,

I did not see your Note till this Saturday evening, or I should have answered it sooner—However as it happens I have but just received the Book which contains the only copy of the verses in question. I have asked for it repeatedly ever since I promised Mr Haydon and could not help the delay; which I regret. The verses can be struck out in no time, and will I hope be quite in time. If you think it at all necessary a proof may be forwarded; but as I shall transcribe it fairly perhaps there may be no need.

I am, Sir

Your obed<sup>t</sup>. Serv<sup>t</sup>

James Elmes Esq<sup>re</sup>.

John Keats—

131. To FANNY KEATS. *Monday* 14 June 1819.

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow

*Postmarks:* LOMBARD ST. and 14 JU 1819.

Wentworth Place

My dear Fanny,

I cannot be with you to day for two reasons—1<sup>st</sup> I have my sore-throat coming again to prevent my walking—2<sup>ly</sup> I do not happen just at present to be flush of silver so that

<sup>1</sup> Doubtless the second 'must' was wrongly written for 'run', 'rush', or some such word.

130. The original letter, in the British Museum (Add MS. 22130, f. 88), bears a note signed 'J. E.' reading:—'From the late John Keats, the Poet, to Mr Elmes, about a sonnet to Haydon'. But I do not think this is the case, and scarcely doubt that the real subject is the 'Ode to a Nightingale', which appeared in the 'Annals of the Fine Arts', under the editorship of James Elmes, in July 1819. I do not think Keats would call a sonnet or sonnets 'the verses in question'; but he would very likely apply to the Ode both that term and the term 'those lines', which he uses in the next letter to Haydon (p. 351) in regard, as it seems to me, to the same poem as he here mentions to Elmes. Although the postmark of that letter is imperfect I have no doubt that it belongs to the 17th of June 1819.

131. It may be assumed that it was a walk home at night that Keats

1819

Letter 132

I might ride. Tomorrow I am engaged—but the day after you shall see me. M<sup>r</sup> Brown is waiting for me as we are going to Town together, so good bye.

Your affectionate Brother  
John

132. To FANNY KEATS. (*Thursday 17 June 1819.*)

Address: Miss Keats | R. Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and JU 18 1819

Wentworth Place

My dear Fanny,

Still I cannot affo(r)d to spend money by Coachire and still my throat is not well enough to warrant my walking. I went yesterday to ask M<sup>r</sup> Abbey for some money; but I could not on account of a Letter he showed me from my Aunt's Solicitor—You do not understand the business—I trust it will not in the end be detrimental to you. I am going to try the Press once more and to that end shall retire to live cheaply in the country and compose myself and verses as well as I can. I have very good friends ready to help me—and I am the more bound to be careful of the money they lend me. It will all be well in the course of a year I hope. I am confident of it, so do not let it trouble you at all. M<sup>r</sup> Abbey showed me a Letter he had received from George containing the news of the birth of a Niece for us—and all doing well—he said he would take it to you—so I suppose to day you will see it. I was preparing to enq(i)re for a Situation with an Apothecary, put (<for but> M<sup>r</sup> Brown persuad(e)s me to try the press once more; so I will with all my industry and ability. M<sup>r</sup> Rice a friend of mine in ill health has proposed ret(i)r-ing to the back of the isle of wight—which I hope will be cheap in the summer—I am sure it will in the winter. Thence you shall frequently hear from me and in the Letters I will copy those lines I may write which will be

feared to undertake in consequence of the state of his throat. Otherwise this little note would seem to indicate a more serious premonitory condition of things than we have any warrant to suppose, seeing that the time was the middle of June, when, if at all, one would suppose, a walk to Walthamstow and back might have been safely undertaken.—H.B.F.

132. The second sentence of this letter evidently refers to the visit to Abbey that is mentioned in the next letter to Haydon; it seems clear that Keats went to Abbey on the 16th of June.

most pleasing to you in the confidence you will show them to ~~me~~ no one. I have not run quite aground yet I hope, having written this morning to several people to whom I have lent money, requesting repayment. I shall hencefore shake off my indolent fits, and among other reformation be more diligent in writing to you and mind you always answer me. I shall be obliged to go out of town on Saturday<sup>1</sup> and shall have no money till tomorrow, so I am very sorry to think I shall not be able to come to Walthamstow. The Head M<sup>r</sup> Seve(r)n did of me is now too dear but here inclosed is a very capital Profile done by M<sup>r</sup> Brown.<sup>2</sup> I will write again on Monday or Tuesday—M<sup>r</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke are well.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

133. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Thursday*  
17 June (1819).

Address: B. R. Haydon Esq<sup>re</sup> | Lisson grove north | Paddington

*Imperfect postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 17 JU.

Thursday Morning  
Wentworth Place

My dear Haydon,

I know you will not be quite prepared for this, because your Pocket must needs be very low having been at ebb tide so long: but what can I do? mine is lower. I was the day before yesterday much in want of Money: but some news I had yesterday has driven me into necessity. I went to Abbey's for some Cash, and he put into my hand a Letter from my Aunt's Solicitor containing the pleasant information that she was about to file a Bill in Chancery against us. Now in case of a defeat Abbey will be very undeservedly in the wrong box; so I could not ask him for

<sup>1</sup> He was on the Portsmouth coach on Sunday, the 27th of June, see Letter 135, p. 354, so apparently he did not start for the Isle of Wight on Saturday, the 19th.

<sup>2</sup> Probably the silhouette reproduced in William Sharp's 'Life and Letters of Joseph Severn'.

133. In this letter Keats was only seeking from Haydon the return of money lent: that the correspondence already given eventuated in a small loan to Haydon there can be no doubt, seeing that Keats gives his brother an account of the affair later on, in the Winchester journal-letter of September 1819, p. 418.

any more money, nor can I till the affair is decided; and if it goes against him I must in conscience make over to him what little he may have remaining. My purpose is now to make one more attempt in the Press—if that fail, ‘ye hear no more of me’ as Chaucer says<sup>1</sup>—Brown has lent me some money for the present. Do borrow or beg some how what you can for me. Do not suppose I am at all uncomfortable about the matter in any other way than as it forces me to apply to the needy. I could not send you those lines, for I could not get the only copy of them before last ~~friday~~ Saturday evening. I sent them Mr Elmes on Monday. I saw Monkhouse on Sunday—he told me you were getting on with the Picture. I would have come over to you to day, but I am fully employed—

Your’s ever sincerely  
John Keats—

134. To FANNY BRAWNE. *Thursday 1 July 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead | Middx.

*Postmarks:* NEWPORT and 3 JY 1819

Shanklin,  
Isle of Wight, Thursday.

My dearest Lady,

I am glad I had not an opportunity of sending off a Letter which I wrote for you on Tuesday night—’twas too much like one out of Rousseau’s *Heloise*.<sup>2</sup> I am more reasonable this morning. The morning is the only proper time for me to write to a beautiful Girl whom I love so much: for at night, when the lonely day has closed, and the lonely, silent, unmusical Chamber is waiting to receive me as into a Sepulchre, then believe me my passion gets entirely the sway, then I would not have you see those Rhapsodies which I once thought it impossible I should ever give way to, and which I have often laughed at in another, for fear you should think me<sup>3</sup> either too un-

<sup>1</sup> Probably a reminiscence or intentional avoidance of ‘Ye *gete* no more of me’, ‘Legend of Good Women’, l. 1557.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 191, p. 471.

<sup>3</sup> These two words are wanting in the original. As regards laughter at lovers, see what Keats wrote to his brother George in the Winchester journal-letter, before the ‘nonsense verses’ about a Party of Lovers, both on p. 401.

happy or perhaps a little mad. I am now at a very pleasant Cottage window, looking onto a beautiful hilly country, with a glimpse of the sea; the morning is very fine. I do not know how elastic my spirit might be, what pleasure I might have in living here and breathing and wandering as free as a stag about this beautiful Coast if the remembrance of you did not weigh so upon me. I have never known any unalloy'd Happiness for many days together: the death or sickness of some one<sup>1</sup> has always spoilt my hours—and now when none such troubles oppress me, it is you must confess very hard that another sort of pain should haunt me. Ask yourself my love whether you are not very cruel to have so entrammelled me, so destroyed my freedom. Will you confess this in the Letter you must write immediately and do all you can to console me in it—make it rich as a draught of poppies to intoxicate me—write the softest words and kiss them that I may at least touch my lips where yours have been. For myself I know not how to express my devotion to so fair a form: I want a brighter word than bright, a fairer word than fair. I almost wish we were butterflies and liv'd but three summer days—three such days with you I could fill with more delight than fifty common years could ever contain. But however selfish I may feel, I am sure I could never act selfishly: as I told you a day or two before I left Hampstead, I will never return to London if my Fate does not turn up Pam<sup>2</sup> or at least a Court-card. Though I could centre my Happiness in you, I cannot expect to engross your heart so entirely—indeed if I thought you felt as much for me as I do for you at this moment I do not think I could restrain myself from seeing you again tomorrow for the delight of one embrace. But no—I must live upon hope and Chance. In case of the worst that can happen, I shall still love you—but what hatred shall I have for another! Some lines I read the other day are continually ringing a peal in my ears:

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that Thomas Keats had died about seven months before the date of this letter.

<sup>2</sup> Pam is the knave of clubs in the game of loo.

Ev'n mighty Pam, that kings and queens o'erthrew,  
And mow'd down armies in the fights of Loo,  
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,  
Falls undistinguish'd by the victor Spade!—

Pope's 'Rape of the Lock', III. 61-4.

To see those eyes I prize above mine own  
 Dart favors on another—  
 And those sweet lips (yielding immortal nectar)  
 Be gently press'd by any but myself—  
 Think, think Francesca, what a cursed thing  
 It were beyond expression!<sup>1</sup>

J.

Do write immediately. There is no Post from this Place, so you must address Post Office, Newport, Isle of Wight. I know before night I shall curse myself for having sent you so cold a Letter; yet it is better to do it as much in my senses as possible. Be as kind as the distance will permit to your

J. Keats.

Present my Compliments to your mother, my love to Margaret and best remembrances to your Brother—if you please so.<sup>2</sup>

135. To FANNY KEATS. *Tuesday 6 July 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow | near London.

*Postmarks:* NEWPORT and JY 8 1819.

Shanklin  
 Isle of Wight  
 Tuesday July 6<sup>th</sup>

My dear Fanny,

I have just received another Letter from George—full of as good news as we can expect. I cannot inclose it to

<sup>1</sup> But should that will  
 To be so be forced, Marcelia; and I live  
 To see those eyes I prize above mine own  
 Dart favours, though compell'd, upon another;  
 Or those sweet lips, yielding immortal nectar,  
 Be gently touched by any but myself;  
 Think, think, Marcelia, what a cursed thing  
 I were, beyond expression!

Sforza in Philip Massinger's 'Duke of Milan', i. iii. 200–7.

<sup>2</sup> Fanny's father, Mr. Samuel Brawne, a gentleman of independent means, had died while she was still a child; and Mrs. Brawne resided at Hampstead, with her three children, Fanny, Samuel, and Margaret. Samuel, being next in age to Fanny, was a youth going to school in 1819; and Margaret was a child at this time.—H.B.F.

you as I could wish, because it contains matters of Business to which I must for a Week to come have an immediate reference. I think I told you the purpose for which I retired to this place—to try the fortune of my Pen once more, and indeed I have some confidence in my success: but in every event, believe me my dear sister, I shall be sufficiently comfortable, as, if I cannot lead that life of competence and society I should wish, I have enough knowledge of my gallipots<sup>1</sup> to ensure me an employment & maintenance. The Place I am in now I visited once before<sup>2</sup> and a very pretty place it is were it not for the bad Weather. Our window looks over house tops and Cliffs onto the Sea, so that when the Ships sail past the Cottage chimneys you may take them for Weathercocks. We have Hill and Dale forest and Mead and plenty of Lobsters. I was on the Portsmouth Coach the Sunday before last in that heavy shower—and I may say I went to Portsmouth by water—I got a little cold and as it always flies to my throat I am a little out of sorts that way—There were on the Coach with me some common french people, but very well behaved—there was a woman amongst them to whom the poor Men in ragged coats were more gallant than ever I saw gentleman to Lady at a Ball. When we got down to walk up hill—one of them pick'd a rose, and on remounting gave it to the woman with 'Ma'mselle—voila une bell(e) rose!' I am so hard at work that perhaps I should not have written to you for a day or two if Georges Letter had not diverted my attention to the interests and pleasure of those I love—and ever believe that when I do not behave punctually it is from a very necessary occupation, and that my silence is no proof of my not thinking of you, or that I want more than a gentle philip to bring you(r) image with every claim before me. You have never seen mountains, or I might tell you that the hill at Steep-hill is I think almost of as much consequence as Mount Rydal on Lake Winander. Bonchurch too is a very delightful Place—as I can see by the Cottages all romantic—covered with creepers and honeysuckles with roses and eglantines peeping in at the windows. Fit abodes for the People I guess live in them, romantic old maids fond of

<sup>1</sup> His own good-tempered use of this term does not look much as if the vulgar ribaldry of 'Blackwood's Magazine' rankled in his mind.

<sup>2</sup> In April 1817.

no(vels) or soldiers widows with a pretty jointure—or any body's widows or aunts or anythings given to Poetry and a Piano forte—as far as in 'em lies—as people say. If I could play upon the Guitar I might make my fortune with an old song—and get t(w)o blessings at once—a Lady's heart and the Rheumatism. But I am almost affraid to peep at those little windows—for a pretty window should show a pretty face, and as the world goes chances are against me. I am living with a very good fellow indeed, a M<sup>r</sup> Rice. He is unfortunately labouring under a complaint which has for some years been a burthen to him. This is a pain to me. He has a greater tact in speaking to people of the village than I have, and in those matters is a great amusement as well (as) a good friend to me. He bought a ham the other day for say(s) he 'Keats, I don't think a Ham is a wrong thing to have in a house.' Write to me, Shanklin Isle of Wight, as soon as you can; for a Letter is a great treat to me here—believing me ever

Your affectionate Brother, John —

136. To FANNY BRAWNE. *Thursday 8 July 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead | Middx

*Postmarks:* NEWPORT and 10 JY 1819.

July 8<sup>th</sup>

My sweet Girl,

Your Letter gave me more delight, than any thing in the world but yourself could do; indeed I am almost astonished that any absent one should have that luxurious power over my senses which I feel. Even when I am not thinking of you I receive your influence and a tenderer nature steeling upon me. All my thoughts, my unhappiest days and nights have I find not at all cured me of my love of Beauty,) but made it so intense that I am miserable that you are not with me: or rather breathe in that dull sort of patience that cannot be called Life. I never knew before, what such a love as you have made me feel, was; I did not believe in it; my Fancy was affraid of it, (lest it should burn me up. But if you will fully love me, though there may be some fire, 'twill not be more than we can bear when moistened and bedewed with Pleasures. You mention 'horrid people' and ask me whether it depend upon



them, whether I see you again. Do understand me, my love, in this. I have so much of you in my heart that I must turn Mentor when I see a chance of harm befalling you. I would never see any thing but Pleasure in your eyes, love on your lips, and Happiness in your steps. I would wish to see you among those amusements suitable to your inclinations and spirits; so that our loves might be a delight in the midst of Pleasures agreeable enough, rather than a resource from vexations and cares. But I doubt much, in case of the worst, whether I shall be philosopher enough to follow my own Lessons: if I saw my resolution give you a pain I could not. Why may I not speak of your Beauty, since without that I could never have lov'd you. I cannot conceive any beginning of such love as I have for you but Beauty. There may be a sort of love for which, without the least sneer at it, I have the highest respect and can admire it in others: but it has not the richness, the bloom, the full form, the enchantment of love after my own heart. So let me speak of you (r) Beauty, though to my own endangering; if you could be so cruel to me as to try elsewhere its Power. You say you are afraid I shall think you do not love me—in saying this you make me ache the more to be near you. I am at the diligent use of my faculties here, I do not pass a day without sprawling some blank verse or tagging some rhymes; and here I must confess, that, (since I am on that subject,) I love you the more in that I believe you have liked me for my own sake and for nothing else. I have met with women whom I really think would like to be married to a Poem and to be given away by a Novel. I have seen your Comet,<sup>1</sup> and only wish it was a sign that poor Rice would get well whose illness makes him rather a melancholy companion: and the more so as so to conquer his feelings and hide them from me, with a forc'd Pun. I kiss'd your writing over in the hope you had indulg'd me by leaving a trace of honey—What was your dream? Tell it me and I will tell you the interpretation thereof.

Ever yours, my love!

John Keats.

Do not accuse me of delay—we have not here an opportunity of sending letters every day. Write speedily.

<sup>1</sup> On the 26th of June 1819 the head of a comet passed across the face of the sun; it was not generally visible before the first days of July.

1819

Letter 137

137. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. Sunday 11  
July 1819.

*Address and postmark not recorded.*

Shanklin n<sup>r</sup>. Ryde Isle of Wight. Sunday 12 July 1819.<sup>1</sup>

My dear Reynolds,

\* \* \* \* \*

You will be glad to hear under my own hand (tho' Rice says we are like Sauntering Jack & Idle Joe) how diligent I have been, & am being. I have finish'd the Act,<sup>2</sup> and in the interval of beginning the 2d have proceeded pretty well with Lamia, finishing the 1st part which consists of about 400 lines. \* \* \* I have great hopes of success, because I make use of my Judgment more deliberately than I yet have done<sup>3</sup>; but in case of failure with the world, I shall find my content. And here (as I know you have my good at heart as much as a Brother), I can only repeat to you what I have said to George—that however I sho<sup>d</sup> like to enjoy what the competences of life procure, I am in no wise dashed at a different prospect.<sup>4</sup> I have spent too many thoughtful days & moralized thro' too many nights for that, and fruitless wo<sup>d</sup> they be indeed, if they did not by degrees make me look upon the affairs of the world with a healthy deliberation. I have of late been moulting: not for fresh feathers and wings: they are gone, and in their stead I hope to have a pair of patient sublunary legs. I have altered, not from a Chrysalis into a butterfly, but the Contrary, having two little loopholes, whence I may look out into the stage of the world: and that world on our coming here I almost forgot. The first time I sat down to write, I co<sup>d</sup> scarcely believe in the necessity of so doing. It struck me as a great oddity. Yet the very corn which is now so beautiful, as if it had only took to ripening yesterday, is for the market: so, why sho<sup>d</sup> I be delicate<sup>5</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> The 12th of July 1819 was a Monday.

<sup>2</sup> Act 1 of 'Otho the Great'.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 90, p. 221.

<sup>4</sup> See Letter 135 to Fanny, not George, Keats.

<sup>5</sup> Lord Houghton says at this point—'Sir James Mackintosh, who had openly protested against the mode of criticism employed against "Endymion", and had said, in a letter still extant, that "such attacks will interest every liberal mind in the author's success", writing to Messrs. Taylor, on the 19th of July in this year, enquires, "Have you any other literary novelties in verse? I very much admire your young poet, with all his singularities. Where is he? and what high design does he meditate?"'

138. To FANNY BRAWNE. *Thursday* (15 July 1819).

*Address:* Miss Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead | Middx.

*Postmark not recorded.*

Shanklin

Thursday Evening

My love,

I have been in so irritable a state of health these two or three last days, that I did not think I should be able to write this week. Not that I was so ill, but so much so as only to be capable of an unhealthy teasing letter. To night I am greatly recovered only to feel the languor I have felt after you touched with ardency. You say you perhaps might have made me better: you would then have made me worse: now you could quite effect a cure: What fee my sweet Physician would I not give you to do so. Do not call it folly, when I tell you I took your letter last night to bed with me. In the morning I found your name on the sealing wax obliterated. I was startled at the bad omen till I recollected that it must have happened in my dreams, and they you know fall out by contraries. You must have found out by this time I am a little given to bode ill like the raven; it is my misfortune not my fault; it has proceeded from the general tenor of the circumstances of my life, and rendered every event suspicious. However I will no more trouble either you or myself with sad Prophecies; though so far I am pleased at it as it has given me opportunity to love your disinterestedness towards me. I can be a raven no more; you and pleasure take possession of me at the same moment. I am afraid you have been unwell. If through me illness have touched you (but it must be with a very gentle hand) I must be selfish enough to feel a little glad at it. Will you forgive me this? I have been reading lately an oriental tale of a very beautiful color<sup>1</sup>—It is of a city of melancholy men,

138. This letter appears to belong between those of the 8th and 25th of July 1819; and of the two Thursdays between those dates it seems likelier that the 15th would be the one than that the letter should have been written so near the 25th as on the 22nd. The original having been mislaid, I have not been able to take the evidence of the postmark. It will be noticed that at the close he speaks of a weekly exchange of letters with Miss Brawne; and by placing this letter at the 15th this programme is pretty nearly realized so far as Keats's letters from the Isle of Wight are concerned.—H.B.F.

<sup>1</sup> The story in question is one of the many derivatives from the Third

all made so by this circumstance. Through a series of adventures each one of them by turns reach(es) some gardens of Paradise where they meet with a most enchanting Lady; and just as they are going to embrace her, she bids them shut their eyes—they shut them—and on opening their eyes again find themselves descending to the earth in a magic basket. The remembrance of this Lady and their delights lost beyond all recovery render them melancholy ever after. How I applied this to you, my dear; how I palpitated at it; how the certainty that you were in the same world with myself, and though as beautiful, not so talismanic as that Lady; how I could not bear you should be so you must believe because I swear it by yourself. I cannot say when I shall get a volume ready. I have three or four stories half done, but as I cannot write for the mere sake of the press, I am obliged to let them progress or lie still as my fancy chooses. By Christmas perhaps they may appear,<sup>1</sup> but I am not yet sure they ever will. 'Twill be no matter, for Poems are as common as newspapers and I do not see why it is a greater crime in me than in another to let the verses of an half-fledged brain tumble into the reading-rooms and drawing room windows. Rice has been better lately than usual: he is not suffering from any neglect of his parents who have for some years been able to appreciate him better than they did in his first youth, and are now devoted to his comfort. Tomorrow I shall, if my health continues to improve during the night, take a look farther about the country, and spy at the parties about here who come hunting after the picturesque like beagles. It is astonishing how they raven down scenery like children do sweetmeats. The wondrous Chine here is a very great Lion: I wish I had as many guineas as there have been spy-glasses in it. I have been, I cannot tell why, in capital spirits this last

Calender's Story in 'The Thousand and One Nights' and the somewhat similar tale of 'The Man who laughed not', included in the notes to Lane's 'Arabian Nights' and in the text of John Payne's translation of the complete work. I am indebted to Dr. Reinhold Köhler, Librarian of the Grand-ducal Library of Weimar, for identifying the particular variant referred to by Keats, as the 'Histoire de la Corbeille', in the 'Nouveaux Contes Orientaux' of the Comte de Caylus. William Morris's beautiful poem 'The Man who never laughed again', in 'The Earthly Paradise', has familiarized to English readers one variant of the legend.—H.B.F.

<sup>1</sup> No such collection appeared until the following summer, when 'Lamia, Isabella, &c.' was published.

hour. What reason? When I have to take my candle and retire to a lonely room, without the thought as I fall asleep, of seeing you tomorrow morning? or the next day, or the next—it takes on the appearance of impossibility and eternity—I will say a month—I will say I will see you in a month at most, though no one but yourself should see me; if it be but for an hour. I should not like to be so near you as London without being continually with you: after having once more kissed you Sweet I would rather be here alone at my task than in the bustle and hateful literary chitchat. Meantime you must write to me—as I will every week—for your letters keep me alive. My sweet Girl I cannot speak my love for you. Good night! and

Ever yours  
John Keats

138a. To RICHARD ABBEY. Friday 16 July 1819.

Address: R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Pancras Lane | Queen Street | London

Postmark: 16 JY 1819.

Shank<lin>

Dear Sir,

I have been wait<ing very anxiously> for an answer to my Le<tter from here on> the 7<sup>th</sup> concerning my brot<her's affairs. I can> see plainly the state of the <matter mentioned from the> letter itself. You will see th<at I am not call>ing on you for a larger am<ount than you have> of his in your hands: but th<e greatest amount> now that I <c>an afford to lend <him.>

As other parties are expecting to s<hare in it I> will take the Liberty of asking o<ur friend> Mr. Haslam, to call upon you <one of these> days. I am sorry to be of so <much trouble> to you, and that it is out of my power to avoid the giving of it. In hope that the impediments to the transfer of George's property may be disappearing I remain

Your 'obedient Servant  
John Keats.

138a. This probably refers to a letter to Abbey written on 7 July on receipt of George's letter mentioned at the beginning of Letter 135, p. 353.

139. To FANNY BRAWNE. Sunday 25 July 1819.

Address: Miss Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead | Middx.

Postmark: 27 JY 1819.<sup>1</sup>

Sunday Night.

My sweet Girl,

I hope you did not blame me much for not obeying your request of a Letter on Saturday: we have had four in our small room playing at cards night and morning leaving me no undisturb'd opportunity to write. Now Rice and Martin<sup>2</sup> are gone I am at liberty. Brown to my sorrow confirms the account you give of your ill health. You cannot conceive how I ache to be with you: how I would die for one hour—for what is in the world? I say you cannot conceive; it is impossible you should look with such eyes upon me as I have upon you: it cannot be. Forgive me if I wander a little this evening, for I have been all day employ'd in a very abstr(a)ct Poem<sup>3</sup> and I am in deep love with you—two things which must excuse me. I have, believe me, not been an age in letting you take possession of me; the very first week I knew you I wrote myself your vassal; but burnt the Letter as the very next time I saw you I thought you manifested some dislike to me. If you should ever feel for Man at the first sight what I did for you, I am lost. Yet I should not quarrel with you, but hate myself if such a thing were to happen—only I should burst if the thing were not as fine as a Man as you are as a Woman. Perhaps I am too vehement, then fancy me on my knees, especially when I mention a part of your Letter which hurt me; you say speaking of M<sup>r</sup> Severn 'but you must be satisfied in knowing that I admired you much more than your friend'. My dear love, I cannot believe there ever was or ever could be any thing to admire in me especially as far as sight goes—I cannot be admired, I am not a thing to be admired. You are, I love you; all I can bring you is a swooning admiration of your Beauty. I hold that place among Men which snubnos'd brunettes with meeting eyebrows do among

<sup>1</sup> 'Newport' is not stamped on this letter, as on previous ones; but it is evident that Keats and his friend Brown were still at Shanklin.

<sup>2</sup> John Martin, sometime of Holles Street, Cavendish Square, publisher. He was now in partnership with Rodwell, in Bond Street. See note 1, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> This may have reference to some passage in either 'Lamia' or 'Hyperion'.

women—they are trash to me—unless I should find one among them with a fire in her heart like the one that burns in mine. You absorb me in spite of myself—you alone: for I look not forward with any pleasure to what is call'd being settled in the world; I tremble at domestic cares—yet for you I would meet them, though if it would leave you the happier I would rather die than do so. I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your Loveliness and the hour of my death. O that I could have possession of them both in the same minute.<sup>1</sup> I hate the world: it batters too much the wings of my self-will, and would I could take a sweet poison from your lips to send me out of it. From no others would I take it. I am indeed astonish'd to find myself so careless of all cha(r)ms but yours—rememb(e)ring as I do the time when even a bit of ribband was a matter of interest with me. What softer words can I find for you after this—what it is I will not read. Nor will I say more here, but in a Postscript answer any thing else you may have mentioned in your Letter in so many words—for I am distracted with a thousand thoughts. I will imagine you Venus to-night and pray, pray, pray to your star like a He(a)then.

Your's ever, fair Star,

John Keats

My seal is mark'd like a family table cloth with my Mother's initial F for Fanny: put between my Father's initials. You will soon hear from me again. My respectful Compts to your Mother. Tell Margaret<sup>2</sup> I'll send her a reef of best rocks and tell Sam<sup>2</sup> I will give him my light bay hunter if he will tie the Bishop hand and foot and pack him in a hamper and send him down for me to bathe him for his health with a Necklace of good snubby stones about his Neck.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'And so live ever—or else swoon to death.'—'Bright Star' sonnet.

<sup>2</sup> Fanny Brawne's young sister and brother.

<sup>3</sup> I am unable to obtain any positive explanation of the allusion made in this strange sentence. It is not, however, impossible that 'the Bishop' was merely a nickname of some one in the Hampstead circle—or perhaps the name of a dog.

1819

Letter 140

140. To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE. *Saturday*.  
31 July 1819.

Address: C. W. Dilke Esq<sup>re</sup> | Navy Pay Office | Somerset House  
| London—

Postmarks: NEWPORT and 2 AU 1819

Shanklin Saturday Eveng

My dear Dilke,

I will not make my diligence an excuse for not writing to you sooner—because I consider idleness a much better plea. A Man in the hurry of business of any sort is expected and ought to be expected to look to every thing—his mind is in a whirl, and what matters it—what whirl? But to require a Letter of a Man lost in idleness is the utmost cruelty, you cut the thread of his existence, you beat, you pummel him, you sell his goods and chattels, you put him in prison; you impale him; you crucify him. If I had not put pen to paper since I saw you this would be to me a *vi et armis* taking up before the Judge—but having got over my darling lounging habits a little, it is with scarcely any pain I come to this dating from Shankling and Dr Dilke, The Isle of Wight is but so so &c. Rice and I passed rather a dull time of it.<sup>1</sup> I hope he will not repent coming with me. He was unwell and I was not in very good health: and I am afraid we made each other worse by acting upon each others spirits. We would grow as melancholy as need be. I confess I cannot bear a sick person in a House especially alone—it weighs upon me day and night—and more so when perhaps the Case is irretrievable—Indeed I think Rice is in a dangerous state. I have had a Letter from him which speaks favourably of his health at present—Brown and I are pretty well harnessed again to our dogcart. I mean the Tragedy which goes on sinkingly—We are thinking of introducing an Elephant but have not historical reference within reach to determine us as to Otho's Menagerie. When Brown first mention'd this I took it for a Joke; however he brings such plausible reasons, and discourses so eloquently on the dramatic effect that I am giving it a serious consideration.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Rice had gone away by the 25th of July: see Letter 139, p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> On the 12th of August Brown wrote to Dilke: 'Keats is very industrious, but I swear by the prompter's whistle, and by the bangs of stage-doors, he is obstinately monstrous. What think you of Otho's threatening cold pig to the new-married couple? He says the Emperor must have a spice of drollery. His introduction of Grimm's adventure, lying three days on his back for



Art of Poetry is not sufficient for us, and if we get on in that as well as we do in painting we shall by next winter crush the Reviews and the royal Academy. Indeed if Brown would take a little of my advice he could not fail to be first pallet of his day. But odd as it may appear, he says plainly that he cannot see any force in my plea for putting Skies in the back ground—and leaving indian ink out of an ash tree—The other day he was sketching Shanklin Church and as I saw how the business was going on, I challenged him to a trial of Skill—he lent me Pencil and Paper—we keep the Sketches to contend for the Prize at the Gallery. I will not say whose I think best—but really I do not think Brown's done to the top of the Art—A word or two on the Isle of Wight—I have been no further than Steephill. If I may guess I should (say) that there is no finer part in the Island than from this Place to Steephill—I do not hesitate to say it is fine. Bonchurch is the best. But I have been so many finer walks, with a back ground of lake and mountain instedd of the sea, that I am not much touch'd with it, though I credit it for all the Surprise I should have felt if it had taken my cockney maidenhead. But I may call myself an old Stager in the picturesque, and unless it be something very large and overpowering I cannot receive any extraordinary relish. I am sorry to hear that Charles<sup>1</sup> is so much oppress'd at Westminster: though I am sure it will be the finest touch stone for his Metal in the world—His troubles will grow day by day less, as his age and strength increase. The very first Battle he wins will lift him from the Tribe of Manas-sah.<sup>2</sup> I do not know how I should feel were I a Father—but I hope I should strive with all my Power not to let the present trouble me—When your Boy shall be twenty, ask him about his childish troubles and he will have no more memory of them than you have of yours. Brown tells me M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke sets off to day for Chichester—I am glad—I was going to say she had a fine day—but there

love, though it spoils the unity of time, is not out of the way for the character of Ludolf, so I have consented to it; but I cannot endure his fancy of making the princess blow up her hair-dresser, for smearing her cheek with pomatum, and spoiling her rouge. It may be natural, as he observes, but so might many things. However, such as it is, it has advanced to nearly the end of the fourth act.—'The Papers of a Critic', vol. i, p. 9.

<sup>1</sup> Dilke's only son, afterwards Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, first Baronet of the name.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Judges vi. 15, viii. 22.

has been a great Thunder cloud muttering over Hampshire all day—I hope she is now at supper with a good Appetite—So Reynolds's Piece<sup>1</sup> succeeded—that is all well.

Papers have with thanks been duly received. We leave this Place on the 13<sup>th</sup> and will let you know where we may be a few days after—Brown says he will write when the fit comes on him. If you will stand law expenses I'll beat him into one before his time—When I come to town I shall have a little talk with you about Brown and one Jenny Jacobs.<sup>2</sup> Open daylight! he don't care. I am affraid the(r) will be some more feet for little stockings—*of Keats' making. (I mean the feet.)* Brown here tried at a piece of Wit but it failed him, as you see though long a brewing,—*this is a 2<sup>d</sup> lie.* Men should never despair—you see he has tried again and succeeded to a miracle.—He wants to try again, but as I have a right to an inside place in my own Letter—I take possession.

Your sincere friend.

John Keats—

141. To FANNY BRAWNE. *Thursday 5 and Friday 6 Aug. 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead Middx—

*Postmarks:* NEWPORT and 9 AU 1819

Shanklin Thursday Night

My dear Girl,

You say you must not have any more such Letters as the last: I'll try that you shall not by running obstinate the other way—Indeed I have not fair play—I am not idle enough for proper downright love-letters—I leave this minute a scene in our Tragedy and see you (think it not blasphemy) through the mist of Plots speeches, counterplots and counterspeeches—The Lover is madder than

<sup>1</sup> 'One, Two, Three, Four, Five: by Advertisement', a musical entertainment in one act; see p. 403, note.

<sup>2</sup> The patronymic recalls a passage in Keats's Spenserian stanzas on Brown (pp. 323-4):

Nor in obscured purlieus would he seek  
For curled Jewesses with ankles neat  
Who as they walk abroad make tinkling with their feet.

The interpolations printed in italics are in Brown's handwriting

I am—I am nothing to him<sup>1</sup>—he has a figure like the Statue of Maleager and double distilled fire in his heart. Thank God for my diligence! were it not for that I should be miserable. I encourage it, and strive not to think of you—but when I have succeeded in doing so all day and as far as midnight, you return as soon as this artificial excitement goes off more severely from the fever I am left in—Upon my soul I cannot say what you could like me for. I do not think myself a fright any more than I do Mr A Mr B. and Mr C. yet if I were a woman I should not like A. B. C. But enough of this—So you intend to hold me to my promise of seeing you in a short time. I shall keep it with as much sorrow as gladness: for I am not one of the Paladins of old who livd upon water grass and smiles for years together—What though would I not give to-night for the gratification of my eyes alone? This day week we shall move to Winchester; for I feel the want of a Library.<sup>2</sup> Brown will leave me there to pay a visit to Mr Snook at Bedhampton: in his absence I will flit to you and back. I will stay very little while, for as I am in a train of writing now I fear to disturb it—let it have its course bad or good—in it I shall try my own strength and the public pulse. At Winchester I shall get your Letters more readily; and it being a cathedral City I shall have a pleasure always a great one to me when near a Cathedral, of reading them during the service up and down the Aisle. Friday Morning. Just as I had written thus far last night, Brown came down in his morning coat and nightcap, saying he had been refresh'd by a good sleep and was very hungry—I left him eating and went to bed being too tired to enter into any discussions. You would delight very greatly in the walks about here, the Cliffs, woods, hills, sands, rocks &c about here. They are however not so fine but I shall give them a hearty good bye to exchange them for my Cathedral—Yet again I am not so tired of Scenery as to hate Switzerland—We might spend a pleasant year at Berne or Zurich—if it should please Venus to hear my 'Beseech thee

<sup>1</sup> Few lovers in literature are 'anything' to Ludolph in 'Otho the Great' for sheer hysterical abandonment. Probably a great deal of the torture which that wretched prince is depicted as undergoing was painfully studied from experience.—H.B.F. Keats may have seen an engraving of the celebrated statue of Meleager in the Vatican, the only possible one in his time, Mr. A. Hamilton Smith informs me.

<sup>2</sup> He did not find one; see Letters 146, p. 375, and 158, p. 433.

to hear us O Goddess" And if she should hear god forbid we should what people call, *settle*—turn into a pond, a stagnant Lethe—a vile crescent, row or buildings. Better be imprudent moveables than prudent fixtures. Open my Mouth at the Street door like the Lion's head at Venice to receive hateful cards Letters messages. Go out an(d) wither at teaparties; freeze at dinners; bake at dance(s,) simmer at routs. No my love, trust yourself to me and I will find you nobler amusements, fortune favouring. I fear you will not receive this till Sunday or Monday; as the irishman would write do not in the mean while hate me—I long to be off for Winchester for I begin to dislike the very door posts here—the names, the pebbles. You ask after my health, not telling me whether you are better. I am quite well. You going out is no proof that you are: how is it? Late hours will do you great harm. What fairing is it? I was alone for a couple of days while Brown went gadding over the country with his ancient knapsack. Now I like his society as well as any Man's, yet regretted his return—it broke in upon me like a Thunderbolt—I had got in a dream among my Books—really luxuriating in a solitude and silence you alone should have disturb'd—

Your ever affectionate

John Keats—

142. To BENJAMIN BAILEY. *Saturday 14 Aug. 1819.*

*Address:* To the, | Rev<sup>d</sup> B. Bailey | St. Andrews | N.B.

*Postmarks:* WINCHESTER and 14 AU 1819.

We removed to Winchester for the convenience of a Library and find it an exceeding pleasant Town, enriched with a beautiful Cathedrall and surrounded by a fresh-looking country. We are in tolerably good and cheap Lodgings. Within these two Months I have written 1500 Lines, most of which besides many more of prior composition you will probably see by next Winter. I have written two Tales, one from Boccac(c)io call'd the Pot of Basil; and another call'd St. Agnes' Eve on a popular superstition; and a third call'd Lamia—half finished—I have also been writing parts of my Hyperion and completed 4 Acts of a Tragedy. It was the opinion of most of my friends that I should never be able to write a scene. I will endeavour to wipe away the prejudice—I sincerely hope

you will be pleased when my Labours since we last saw each other shall reach you. One of my Ambitions is to make as great a revolution in modern dramatic writing as Kean has done in acting—another to upset the drawling of the blue stocking literary world—if in the course of a few years I do these two things I ought to die content—and my friends should drink a dozen of Claret on my Tomb—I am convinced more and more every day that (excepting the human friend Philosopher) a fine writer is the most genuine Being in the World. Shakspeare and the paradise Lost every day become greater wonders to me.<sup>1</sup> I look upon fine Phrases like a Lover. I was glad to see, by a Passage in one of Brown's Letters some time ago from the north that you were in such good Spirits.<sup>2</sup> Since that you have been married and in congra(tu)lating you I wish you every continuance of them. Present my Respects to M<sup>rs</sup> Bailey. This sounds oddly to me, and I dare say I do it awkwardly enough: but I suppose by this time it is nothing new to you—Brown's remembrances to you—As far as I know we shall remain at Winchester for a goodish while—

Ever your sincere friend  
John Keats.

143. To FANNY BRAWNE. Monday 16 Aug. 1819.

Address: Miss Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead, |  
Middx | Post. Paid

Postmarks: WINCHESTER 16 AU 1819 and PAID 17 AU 1819.

Winchester August 17<sup>th</sup>

My dear Girl—what shall I say for myself? I have been here four days and not yet written you—'tis true I have had many teasing letters of business to dismiss—and I have been in the Claws, like a Serpent in an Eagle's, of the last

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 145, p. 373.

<sup>2</sup> C. W. Dilke makes the following note against this passage:—'As before mentioned Bailey made an offer to Marianne Reynolds which was declined. He entreated her to take time and think over his proposal. Meanwhile he went to Scotland, fell in love with Gleig's sister, and married; much to the surprise of the Reynolds family, who thought he had behaved ill, and it led to a discussion and a quarrel.'—H.B.F.

<sup>3</sup> The discrepancy between the date written by Keats and that given in the postmark is curious as a comment on his frequent confessions of ignorance as to the date. See also Letters 144, p. 371, and 147, p. 377.

act of our Tragedy.<sup>1</sup> This is no excuse; I know it; I do not presume to offer it. I have no right either to ask a speedy answer to let me know how lenient you are—I must remain some days in a Mist—I see you through a Mist: as I dare say you do me by this time. Believe in the first Letters I wrote you: I assure you I felt as I wrote—I could not write so now. The thousand images I have had pass through my brain—my uneasy spirits—my unguess'd fate—all sp(r)ead as a veil between me and you—Remember I have had no idle leisure to brood over you—'tis well perhaps I have not. I could not have endured the throng of Jealousies<sup>2</sup> that used to haunt me before I had plunged so deeply into imaginary interests. I would feign, as my sails are set, sail on without an interruption for a Brace of Months longer—I am in complete cue—in the fever; and shall in these four Months do an immense deal—This Page as my eye skims over it I see is excessively unloverlike and ungallant—I cannot help it—I am no officer in yawning quarters; no Parson-romeo. My Mind is heap'd to the full; stuff'd like a cricket ball—if I strive to fill it more it would burst. I know the generallity of women would hate me for this; that I should have so unsoften'd so hard a Mind as to forget them; forget the brightest realities for the dull imaginations of my own Brain. But I conjure you to give it a fair thinking; and ask yourself whether 'tis not better to explain my feelings to you, than write artificial Passion—Besides you would see through it. It would be vain to strive to deceive you. 'Tis harsh, harsh, I know it—My heart seems now made of iron—I could not write a proper answer to an invitation to Idalia.<sup>3</sup> You are my Judge: my forehead is on the ground. You seem offended at a little simple innocent childish playfulness in my last.<sup>4</sup> I did not seriously mean to say that you were endeavouring to make me keep my promise. I beg your pardon for it. 'Tis but *just* you(r) Pride should take the alarm—*seriously*. You say I may do as I please—I do not think with any conscience I can; my cash resourses are for the present

<sup>1</sup> Act V of 'Otho the Great' was wholly Keats's, as regards both matter and manner, and not, like the rest, a joint production schemed out by Brown and executed by Keats.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'The Cap and Bells; or, the Jealousies'.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. Venus, so called from Idalium in Cyprus, where she was worshipped. See 'Aeneid', i. 693.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 366.

stopp'd; I fear for some time. I spend no money but it increases my debts. I have all my life thought very little of these matters—they seem not to belong to me. It may be a proud sentence; but, by heaven, I am as entirely above all matters of interest as the Sun is above the Earth—and though of my own money I should be careless; of my Friends I must be spare. You see how I go on—like so many strokes of a Hammer. I cannot help it—I am impell'd, driven to it. I am not happy enough for silken Phrases, and silver sentences. I can no more use soothing words to you than if I were at this moment engaged in a charge of Cavalry—Then you will say I should not write at all—Should I not? This Winchester is a fine place: a beautiful Cathedral and many other ancient building(s) in the Environs. The little coffin of a room at Shanklin is changed for a large room, where I can promenade at my pleasure—looks out onto a beautiful—blank side of a house. It is strange I should like it better than the view of the sea from our window at Shanklin. I began to hate the very posts there—the voice of the old Lady<sup>1</sup> over the way was getting a great Plague. The Fisherman's face never altered any more than our black teapot—the nob however was knock'd off to my little relief. I am getting a great dislike of the picturesque; and can only relish it over again by seeing you enjoy it. One of the pleasantest things I have seen lately was at Cowes. The Regent in his Yatch<sup>2</sup> (I think they spell it) was anchored oppoisite—a beautiful vessel—and all the Yachts and boats on the coast, were passing and repassing it; and curcuiting and tacking about it in every direction—I never beheld any thing so, silent, light, and graceful—As we pass'd over to Southampton, there was nearly an accident. There came by a Boat well mann'd; with t(w)o naval officers at the stern. Our Bow-lines took the top of their little mast and snapped it off close by the bo(a)rd—Had the mast been a little stouter they would have been upset. In so trifling an event I could not help admiring our Seamen—Neither officer nor man in the whole Boat moved a Muscle—they scar(c)ely notic'd it even with words—Forgive me for this flint-

<sup>1</sup> Miss Hewlett identifies her as almost certainly a Mrs. Warder, grandmother of Mr. R. W. Warder, member of an old Shanklin family. See 'A Life of John Keats', London, 1949, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> This orthography was not in Keats's time wholly unauthorized; it was used by Evelyn and by Horace Walpole.

1819

Letter 144

worded Letter, and believe and see that I cannot think of you without some sort of energy—though mal a propos—Even as I leave off it seems to me that a few more moments thought of you would uncrystallize and dissolve me. I must not give way to it—but turn to my writing again—if I fail I shall die hard. O my love, your lips are growing sweet again to my fancy—I must forget them. Ever your affectionate

Keats—

144. To JOHN TAYLOR. *Monday 23 Aug. 1819.*

*Address:* John Taylor, Esq<sup>re</sup> | Taylor and Hessey | Fleet Street | London

*Postmark:* WINCHESTER 23<sup>d</sup> AU 1819

Winchester Monday morn.

24 Aug<sup>st</sup>.

My dear Taylor—

You will perceive that I do not write you till I am forced by necessity: that I am sorry for. You must forgive me for entering abruptly on the subject, merely prefixing an entreaty that you will not consider my business manner of wording and proceeding any distrust of, or stirrup standing against you; but put it to the account of a desire of order and regularity. I have been rather unfortunate lately in money concerns—from a threatened chancery suit. I was deprived at once of all recourse to my Guardian. I relied a little on some of my debts being paid—which are of a tolerable amount—but I have not had one pound refunded—For these three Months Brown has advanced me money: he is not at all flush and I am anxious to get some elsewhere. We have together been engaged (this I should wish to remain secret) in a Tragedy which I have just finish'd; and from which we hope to share moderate Profits. Being thus far connected, Brown proposed to me, to stand with me responsible for any money you may advance to me to drive through the summer—I must observe again that it is not from want of reliance on you(r) readiness to assist me that I offer a Bondill; but as a relief to myself from a too lax sensation of Life—which ought to be



responsible which requires chains for its own sake—duties to fulfil with the more earnestness the less strictly they are imposed Were I completely without hope—it might be different—but am I not right to rejoice in the idea of not being Burthensome to my friends? I feel every confidence that if I choose I may be a popular writer; that I will never be; but for all that I will get a livelihood—I equally dislike the favour of the public with the love of a woman—they are both a cloying treacle to the wings of independence. I shall ever consider them (People) as debtors to me for verses, not myself to them for admiration—which I can do without. I have of late been indulging my spleen by composing a preface *at* them: after all resolving never to write a preface at all. ‘There are so many verses,’ would I have said to them, ‘give me so much means to buy pleasure with as a relief to my hours of labour—You will observe at the end of this if you put down the Letter ‘How a solitary life engenders pride and egotism!’ True: I know it does—but this Pride and egotism will enable me to write finer things than any thing else could—so I will indulge it. Just so much as I am hu(m)bled by the genius above my grasp, am I exalted and look with hate and contempt upon the literary world—A Drummer boy who holds out his hand familiarly to a field marshall—that Drummer boy with me is the good word and favour of the public. Who would wish to be among the commonplace crowd of the little-famous—who are each individually lost in a throng made up of themselves? is this worth louting or playing the hypocrite for? To beg suffrages for a seat on the benches of a myriad-aristocracy in Letters? This is not wise—I am not a wise man—Tis Pride. I will give you a definition of a proud Man—He is a Man who has neither vanity nor wisdom—one fill’d with hatreds cannot be vain—neither can he be wise. Pardon me for hammering instedd of writing—Remember me to Woodhouse Hessey and all in Percey street—

Ever yours sincerely  
John Keats

P.S. I have read what Brown has said on the other side—He ag(r)ees with me that this manner of proceeding might appear to(o) harsh, distant and indelicate with you. This however will place all in a clear light. Had I to bor-

row money of Brown and were in your house, I should request the use of your name in the same manner—<sup>1</sup>

The following note from Brown occupies the 'doublings' of this letter:—

Dear Sir,

Keats has told me the purport of this letter. Had it been in my power to have prevented this application to you, I would have done so. What property I have is locked up, sending me quarterly & half yearly dribbles, insufficient for the support of both of us. I am fully acquainted with his circumstances,—the monies owing to him amount to £230,—the Chancery Suit will not I think eventually be injurious to him,—and his perseverance in the employment of his talents,—will, in my opinion, in a short time, place him in a situation more pleasant to his feelings as far as his pocket is considered. Yet, for all this, I am aware, a man of business should have every security in his power, and Keats especially would be uncomfortable at borrowing unless he gave all *in his power*; besides his own name to a Bill he has none to offer but mine, which I readily agree to, and (speaking in a business-like way) consider I possess ample security for doing so. It is therefore to be considered as a matter of right on your part to demand my name in conjunction with his; and if you should be inclined to judge otherwise, still it would be painful to him not to give you a double security when he can do so, and painful to me to have it withheld when it ought to be given.

Your's sincerely,  
Chas Brown.

145. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Tuesday*  
24 Aug. 1819.

Address: Mr. J. H. Reynolds | Little Britain | Christ's Hospital |  
London

Postmarks: WINCHESTER 24 AU 1819, and E 25 AU 1819.

Winchest<sup>r</sup> August 25<sup>th</sup>

My dear Reynolds,

By this Post I write to Rice, who will tell you why we have left Shanklin; and how we like this Place. I have indeed scarcely any thing else to say, leading so monotonous a life, except I was to give you a history of sensations, and day-nightmares. You would not find me at all unhappy in it; as all my thoughts and feelings which are of the selfish nature, home speculations every day continue to make me more Iron. I am convinced more and more day by day that fine writing is next to fine doing the top thing in the world, the *Paradise Lost* becomes a greater

<sup>1</sup> For the response to this appeal see Letter 148, p. 378.

wonder.<sup>1</sup> The more I know what my diligence may in time probably effect; the more does my heart distend with Pride and Obstinacy<sup>2</sup>—I feel it in my power to become a popular writer—I feel it in my strength to refuse the poisonous suffrage of a public. My own being which I know to be becomes of more consequence to me than the crowds of Shadows in the Shape of Man and women that inhabit a Kingdom. The Soul is a world of itself and has enough to do in its own home. Those whom I know already and who have grown as it were a part of myself I could not do without: but for the rest of Mankind they are as much a dream to me as Milton's Hierarchies. I think if I had a free and healthy and lasting organization of heart and Lungs—as strong as an ox's, so as to be able (to bear) unhurt the shock of extreme thought and sensation without weariness, I could pass my Life very nearly alone though it should last eighty years. But I feel my Body too weak to support me to the height; I am obliged continually to check myself and strive to be nothing. It would be vain for me to endeavour after a more reasonable manner of writing to you: I have nothing to speak of but myself—and what can I say but what I feel? If you should have any reason to regret this state of excitement in me, I will turn the tide of your feelings in the right channel by mentioning that it is the only state for the best sort of Poetry—that is all I care for, all I live for. Forgive me for not filling up the whole sheet; Letters become so irksome to me that the next time I leave London I shall petition them all to be spar'd me. To give me credit for constancy and at the same time wa(i)ve letter writing will be the highest indulgence I can think of

Ever your affectionate friend  
John Keats

146. To FANNY KEATS. *Saturday 28 Aug. 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup>. Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow | near London

*Postmark:* WINCHESTER 29 AU 1819

Winchester August 28<sup>th</sup>

My dear Fanny,

You must forgive me for suffering so long a space to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 142, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Paradise Lost', i. 571-2.

elapse between the dates of my letters. It is more than a fortnight since I left Shanklin, chiefly for the purpose of being near a tolerable Library, which after all is not to be found in this place. However we like it very much: it is the pleasantest Town I ever was in, and has the most recommendations of any. There is a fine Cathedrall which to me is always a source of amusement, part of it built 1400 years ago; and the more modern by a magnificent Man, you may have read of in our History, called William of Wickham. The whole town is beautifully wooded—From the Hill at the eastern extremity you see a prospect of Streets, and old Buildings mixed up with Trees. Then there are the most beautiful streams about I ever saw—full of Trout. There is the Foundation of S<sup>t</sup> Croix about half a mile in the fields—a charity greatly abused. We have a Collegiate School, a roman catholic School; a chapel ditto and a Nunnery! And what improves it all is, the fashionable inhabitants are all gone to Southampton. We are qui(e)t—except a fiddle that now and then goes like a gimlet through my Ears. Our Landlady's Son not being quite a Proficient. I have still been hard at work, having completed a Tragedy I think I spoke of to you. But there I fear all my labour will be thrown away for the present, as I hear M<sup>r</sup> Kean is going to America. For all I can guess I shall remain here till the middle of October—when M<sup>r</sup> Brown will return to his house at Hampstead: whither I shall return with him. I some time since sent the Letter I told you I had received from George to Haslam with a request to let you and M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie see it: he sent it back to me for very insufficient reasons without doing so; and I was so irritated by it that I would not send it travelling about by the post any more: besides the postage is very expensive. I know M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie will think this a great neglect. I am sorry to say my temper gets the better of me—I will not send it again. Some correspondence I have had with M<sup>r</sup> Abbey about George's affairs—and I must confess he has behaved very kindly to me as far as the wording of his Letter went. Have you heard any further mention of his retiring from Business? I am anxious to hear w(h)ether Hodgkinson,<sup>1</sup> whose name I

<sup>1</sup> Abbey's junior partner, who had caused offence to George Keats when employed by Abbey. See also Letters 123, 156, and 221, pp. 313, 405, and 498.

cannot bear to write, will in any likelihood be thrown upon himself. The delightful Weather we have had for two Months is the highest gratification I could receive—no chill'd red noses—no shivering—but fair atmosphere to think in—a clean towel mark'd with the mangle and a basin of clear Water to drench one's face with ten times a day: no need of much exercise—a Mile a day being quite sufficient. My greatest regret is that I have not been well enough to bathe though I have been two Months by the sea side and live now close to delicious bathing—Still I enjoy the Weather I adore fine Weather as the greatest blessing I can have. Give me Books, fruit, french wine and fine whether and a little music out of doors, played by somebody I do not know—not pay the price of one's time for a gig—but a little chance music: and I can pass a summer very quietly without caring much about Fat Louis,<sup>1</sup> fat Regent or the Duke of Wellington. Why have you not written to me? Because you were in expectation of George's Letter and so waited? M<sup>r</sup> Brown is copying out our Tragedy of Otho the great in a superb style—better than it deserves—there as I said is labour in vain for the present. I had hoped to give Kean another opportunity to shine. What can we do now? There is not another actor of Tragedy in all London or Europe. The Covent Garden Company is execrable. Young<sup>2</sup> is the best among them and he is a ranting, coxcombical tasteless Actor—A Disgust A Nausea—and yet the very best after Kean—What a set of barren asses are actors! I should like now to promenade round you(r) Gardens—apple tasting—pear-tasting—plumb-judging—apricot nibbling—peach scrunching—Nectarine-sucking and Melon carving. I have also a great feeling for antiquated cherries full of sugar cracks—and a white currant tree kept for company. I admire lolling on a lawn by a water-lillied pond to eat white currants and see gold fish: and go to the Fair in the Evening if I'm good. There is not hope for that—one is sure to get into some mess before evening. Have these hot days I brag of so much been well or ill for your health? Let me hear soon—

Your affectionate Brother  
John —

<sup>1</sup> Louis XVIII of France.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Mayne Young (1777–1856).

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Letter 147

147. To JOHN TAYLOR. Tuesday 31 Aug. 1819.

Address: John Taylor Esq<sup>re</sup> | Taylor & Hessey | Fleet Street | London<sup>1</sup>

Postmark: WINCHESTER 31 AU 1819

Winchester Sept<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>st</sup>

My dear Taylor,

Brown and I have been employed for these three weeks past from time to time in writing to our different friends: a dead silence is our ownly answer: we wait morning after morning and nothing: tuesday is the day for the Examiner to arrive, this is the second tuesday which has been barren even of a news paper—Men should be in imitation of Spirits ‘responsive to each others note’<sup>2</sup>—Instead of that I pipe and no one hath danced—We have been cursing this morning like Mandeville and Lisle<sup>3</sup>—With this I shall send by the same Post a third Letter to a friend of mine—who though it is of consequence has neither answered right or left. We have been much in want of news from the Theatres having heard that Kean is going to America—but no—not a word. Why I should come on you with all these complaints, I cannot explain to myself: especially as I suspect you must be in the Country. Do answer me soon for I really must know something. I must steer myself by the rudder of information. And I am in want of a Month’s

<sup>1</sup> This letter is redirected in another handwriting to ‘M<sup>r</sup> Taylor | Market Place | Retford’.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ‘Paradise Lost’, iv. 683.

<sup>3</sup> Godwin’s ‘Mandeville—a Tale of the Seventeenth Century in England’ (3 volumes, 1817). The allusion is to Mandeville’s account of his Oxford life, and of young Lisle, with whom he formed a friendship at the University: ‘Sometimes we would sit silent together for hours, like what I have heard of a Quakers’ meeting; and then, suddenly seized with that passion for change which is never utterly extinguished in the human mind, would cry out as by mutual impulse, Come, now let us curse a little! In the art of cursing we were certainly no ordinary proficient; and if an indifferent person could have heard us, he would probably have been considerably struck, with the solemnity, the fervour, the eloquence, the richness of style and imagination, with which we discharged the function. The fulminations of Lisle were directed against Cromwel, his assistants and abettors, against Bradshaw and the regicides, and against the whole body of the Republican and King-killing party. The favourite object of my comminations were the pope, and the cardinals, and the jesuits, and all those, who, from the twelfth century downwards, had devoted the reformers, and the preachers of the pure religion of Christ, to massacre and the flames. . . . While we were thus engaged, we seemed to ourselves to be discharging an indispensable duty; and our eyes sparkled, and our hearts attained a higher degree of complacency, in proportion as we thus proceeded, to “unpack our hearts with curses”.’

cash—now believe me I do not apply to you as if I thought you had a gold Mine. no. I understand these matters well enough now having become well acquainted with the disbursements every Man is tempted to make beyond his means—From this time I have resolved myself to refuse all such requests: tell me you are not flush and I shall thank you heartily—That is a duty you owe to yourself as well as to *me*. I have mulcted Brown to(o) much: let it be my last sin of the kind. I will try what use it will be to insist on my debts being paid.

Ever yours sincerely  
John Keats—

148. To JAMES AUGUSTUS HESSEY. Sunday 5 Sept. 1819.

Address: Hessey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Taylor and Hessey | Fleet Street | London.

Postmark: WINCHESTER 5 SE 1819.

Winchester, Sunday Sept<sup>r</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>

My dear Hessey,

I received this morning yours of yesterday enclosing a 30£ bank post bill. I have been in fear of the Winchester Jail for some time: neither Brown nor myself could get an answer from any one. This morning I hear that some unknown part of a Sum due to me and for which I had been waiting three weeks has been sent to Chichester by mistake. Brown has borrow'd money of a friend of his in Hampshire—A few days ago we had but a few shillings left—and now between us we have 60£ besides what is waiting in the Chichester post office. To be a complete Midas I suppose some one will send me a pair of asses ears by the waggon—There has been such an embargo laid on our correspondence that I can scar(c)ely believe your Letter was only dated yesterday. It seems miraculous.

Ever yours sincerely  
John Keats.

I am sorry to hear such a bad account of himself from Taylor.

1819

Letter 149

149. To JOHN TAYLOR. Sunday 5 Sept. 1819.

Address: John Taylor, Esq<sup>re</sup> | Mr James Taylor's | Retford | Notts.

Postmark: WINCHESTER 5 SE 1819

Winchester Sept<sup>r</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>

My dear Taylor,

This morning I received yours of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and with it a Letter from Hessey enclosing a Bank post Bill of 30£—an ample sum I assure you: more I had no thought of. You should no(t) have delay'd so long in fleet Street; leading an inactive life as you did was breathing poison: you will find the country air do more for you than you expect. But it must be proper country air; you must choose a spot. What sort of a place is Retford? You should live in a dry, gravelly, barren, elevated country open to the currents of air, and such a place is generally furnish'd with the finest springs. The neighbourhood of a rich inclosed fulsome manured arrable Land especially in a valley and almost as bad on a flat, would be almost as bad as the smoke of fleetstreet. Such a place as this was shanklin only open to the south east and surrounded by hills in every other direction. From this south east came the damp from the sea which having no egress the air would for days together take on an unhealthy idiosyncrasy altogether enervating and weakening as a city Smoke—I felt it very much—Since I have been at Winchester I have been improving in health—it is not so confined—and there is on one side of the city a dry chalky down where the air is worth sixpence a pint. So if you do not get better at Retford do not impute it to your own weakness before you have well considered the nature of the air and soil—especially as Autumn is encroaching: for the autum(n) fogs over a rich land is like the steam from cabbage water—What makes the great difference between valemén flatland men, and Mountaineers? The cultivation of the earth in a great measure. Our health temperament and dispositions are taken more (notwithstanding the contradiction of the history of cain and abel) from the air we breathe than is generally imagined. See the difference between a Peasant and a Butcher. I am convinced a great cause of it is the difference of the air they breathe—The one takes his mingled with the fume of slaughter the other with the damp exhalament from the glebe. The teeming damp that



comes from the plough furrow is of great effect in taming the fierceness of a strong Man more than his labour—let him be mowing furze upon a Mountain and at the days end his thoughts will run upon a withe axe if he ever had handled one, let him leave the Plough and he will think qu*(i)*etly of his supper. Agriculture is the tamer of men, the steam from the earth is like drinking their mother's milk. It enervates their natures. This appears a great cause of the imbecillity of the Chinese. And if this sort of atmosphere is a mitigation to the energies of a strong man; how much more must it injure a weak one—unoccupied—unexercised—For what is the cause of so many men maintaining a good state in Cities but occupation—An idle man; a man who is not sensitively alive to self interest in a city cannot continue long in good Health. This is easily explained. If you were to walk leisurely through an unwholesome path in the fens, with a little horror of them you would be sure to have your ague. But let macbeth cross the same path, with the dagger in the air leading him on, and he would never have an ague or any thing like it. You should give these things a serious consideration. Notts I believe is a flat County. You should be on the slope of one of the dry barren hills in somersetshire. I am convinced there is as harmful Air to be breath'd in the country as in Town. I am greatly obliged to you for your Letter. Perhaps if you had had strength and spirits enough you would have felt offended by my offering a note of hand; or rather express'd it. However, I am sure you will give me credit for not in any wise mistrusting you; or imagining you would take advantage of any power I might give you over me. No, it proceeded from my serious resolve not to be a gratuitous borrower: from a great desire to be correct in money matters; to have in my desk the Chronicles of them to refer to, and know my worldly non-estate: besides in case of my death such documents would be but just: if merely as memorials of the friendly turns I had had done to me. Had I known of your illness I should not of *(for have)* written in such fiery phrase in my first Letter. I hope that shortly you will be able to bear six times as much. Brown likes the Tragedy very much: but he is not a fit judge, as I have only acted as Midwife to his plot, and of course he will be fond of his child. I do not think I can make you any extracts without 'spoiling the effect of the

whole when you come to read it. I hope you will then not think my labour mi(s)spent. Since I finish'd it I have finish'd *Lamia*: and am now occupied in revising *St Agnes' Eve* and studying Italian.<sup>1</sup> Ariosto I find as diffuse, in parts, as Spenser. I understand completely the difference between them—I will cross the letter with some lines from *Lamia*. Brown's kindest remembrances to you; and I am ever your most sincere friend

John Keats—

A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone  
 Supportress of the faery roof, made moan  
 Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.  
 Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade  
 Of Palm and Plantain, met, from either side,  
 High in the midst in honour of the bride.  
 Two palms, and then two plantains, and so on,  
 From either side, their stems branch'd one to one  
 All down the aisled place; and beneath all  
 There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to wall.  
 So canopied lay an untasted feast  
 Teeming a perfume. *Lamia* regal drest  
 Silverly pac'd about, and as she went,  
 In pale contented sort of discontent  
 Mission'd her viewless Servants to enrich  
 The splendid cornicing of nook and niche.  
 Between the Tree stems, wainscoated at first  
 Came jasper pannels; then, anon, there burst  
 Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees  
 And with the larger wove in small intricacies.  
 Approving all, she faded at self will,  
 And shut the chamber up close hush'd and still,  
 Complete, and ready for the revels rude,  
 When dreadful guests would come to spoil her solitude  
 The day came soon and all the gossip rout.  
 O senseless Lycius! Dolt! Fool! Madman! Lout!  
 Why would you murder happiness like yours,  
 And show to common eyes these secret bowers?  
 The Herd came, and each guest, with buzzy brain,

<sup>1</sup> Charles Brown in 'Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems' (1838), p. 134, says of Keats: 'when it might be presumed his mind was wholly occupied in *Lamia* or *Hyperion*, I have seen him deeply absorbed in the study of Greek and Italian, both which languages he then commenced, and to which he allotted a portion of each day'.

Arriving at the Portal, gaz'd amain,  
 And enter'd wond'ring; for they knew the Street,  
 Remember'd it from childhood all complete,  
 Without a gap, but ne'er before had seen  
 That royal Porch, that high-built fair demesne;  
 So in went one and all maz'd, curious and keen.  
 Save one; who look'd thereon with eye severe,  
 And, with calm-planted steps, walk'd in austere;  
 'Twas Appolonius:—something to(o) he laught;  
 As though some knotty problem, that had daft  
 His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,  
 And solve, and melt;—'twas just as he foresaw!

Soft went the music, and the tables all  
 Sparkled beneath the viewless banneral  
 Of Magic; and dispos'd in double row  
 Seem'd edged Parterres of white bedded snow,  
 Adorne'd along the sides with living flowers  
 Conversing, laughing after sunny showers:  
 And, as the pleasant appetite entic'd,  
 Gush came the wine, and sheer the meats were slic'd.  
 Soft went the Music; the flat salver sang  
 Kiss'd by the emptied goblet,—and again it rang:  
 Swift bustled by the servants:—here's a health  
 Cries one—another—then as if by stealth,  
 A Glutton drains a cup of Helicon,  
 Too fast down, down his throat the brief delight is gone.  
 "Where is that Music?" cries a Lady fair.  
 "Aye, where is it my dear? Up in the air?"  
 Another whispers. 'Poo!' saith Glutton "Mum!"  
 Then makes his shiny mouth a napkin for his thumb. &c.  
 &c. &c.

This is a good sample of the Story.

Brown is going to Chi(che)ster and Bedhampton avisit-  
 ing—I shall be alone here for three weeks—expecting  
 accounts of your health.

150. To FANNY BRAWNE. *Monday 13 Sept. 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead

*Postmarks:* LOMBARD ST. and 14 SE 1819

Fleet Street, Monday Morn

My dear Girl,

I have been hurried to Town by a Letter from my  
 brother George; it is not of the brightest intelligence. Am

I mad or not? I came by the Friday night coach and have not yet been to Ham⟨p⟩stead. Upon my soul it is not my fault. I cannot resolve to mix any pleasure with my days: they go one like another undistinguishable. If I were to see you to day it would destroy the half comfortable sullenness I enjoy at present into dow⟨n⟩right perplexities. I love you too much to venture to Hampstead, I feel it is not paying a visit, but venturing into a fire. *Que feraije?* as the french novel writers say in fun, and I in earnest: really what can I do? Knowing well that my life must be passed in fatigue and trouble, I have been endeavouring to wean myself from you: for to myself alone what can be much of a misery? As far as they regard myself I can despise all events: but I cannot cease to love you. This morning I scarcely know what I am doing. I am going to Walthamstow. I shall return to Winchester to-morrow;<sup>1</sup> whence you shall hear from me in a few days. I am a Coward, I cannot bear the pain of being happy: 'tis out of the question: I must admit no thought of it.

Yours ever affectionately

John Keats

151. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *Tuesday 21 Sept. 1819.*

*Address:* Mr J. H. Reynolds | 8 Duke St. | Bath.

*Postmark:* WINCHESTER 21 SE 1819

Winchester Tuesday

My dear Reynolds,

I was very glad to hear from Woodhouse that you would meet in the Country. I hope you will pass some pleasant time together. Which I wish to make pleasanter by a brace of letters, very highly to be estimated, as really I have had very bad luck with this sort of game this season. I "kepen in solitarinesse,"<sup>2</sup> for Brown has gone a visiting. I am surprized myself at the pleasure I live alone in. I can give you no news of the place here, or any other idea of it but what I have to this effect written to George. Yesterday I say to him was a grand day for Winchester.<sup>3</sup> They elected

<sup>1</sup> He waited till the day after, and returned to Winchester on Wednesday the 15th of September. See Letter 152, p. 386.

<sup>2</sup> See 'The Eve of St. Mark', p. 417.

<sup>3</sup> It will be noticed that this humorous account of Winchester is literally

a Mayor. It was indeed high time the place should receive some sort of excitement. There was nothing going on: all asleep: not an old maid's sedan returning from a card party: and if any old woman got tipsy at Christenings they did not expose it in the streets. The first night tho' of our arrival here there was a slight uproar took place at about 10 o' the Clock. We heard distinctly a noise patting down the high Street as of a walking cane of the good old Dowager breed; and a little minute after we heard a less voice observe "What a noise the ferril made—it must be loose"—Brown wanted to call the Constables, but I observed 'twas only a little breeze, and would soon pass over.—The side streets here are excessively maiden-lady like: the door steps always fresh from the flannel. The knockers have a staid serious, nay almost awful quietness about them.—I never saw so quiet a collection of Lions' & Rams' heads. The doors <are> most part black, with a little brass handle just above the keyhole, so that in Winchester a man may very quietly shut himself out of his own house. How beautiful the season is now—How fine the air. A temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather—Dian skies—I never lik'd stubble-fields so much as now—Aye better than the chilly green of the Spring. Somehow a stubble-plain looks warm—in the same way that some pictures look warm—This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it.<sup>1</sup>

I hope you are better employed than in gaping after weather. I have been at different times so happy as not to know what weather it was—No I will not copy a parcel of verses. I always somehow associate Chatterton with autumn. He is the purest writer in the English Language. He has no French idiom, or particles like Chaucer—'tis genuine English Idiom in English Words. I have given up Hyperion—there were too many Miltonic inversions in it—Miltonic verse can not be written but in an artful or rather artist's humour. I wish to give myself up to other sensations.<sup>2</sup> English ought to be kept up. It may be interesting to you to pick out some lines from Hyperion and put a

a scrap copied out of the long letter which Keats was writing to his brother George; see pp. 413–14.

<sup>1</sup> He composed the ode 'To Autumn', see the letter to Woodhouse following this.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 156, p. 425.

mark  $\times$  to the false beauty proceeding from art, and one || to the true voice of feeling. Upon my soul 'twas imagination I cannot make the distinction—Every now & then there is a Miltonic intonation—But I cannot make the division properly. The fact is I must take a walk: for I am writing so long a letter to George; and have been employed at it all the morning. You will ask, have I heard from George. I am sorry to say not the best news—I hope for better—This is the reason among others that if I write to you it must be in such a scraplike way. I have no meridian to date Interests from, or measure circumstances—To-night I am all in a mist; I scarcely know what's what. But you knowing my unsteady & vagarish disposition, will guess that all this turmoil will be settled by to-morrow morning. It strikes me to-night that I have led a very odd sort of life for the two or three last years—Here & there—No anchor—I am glad of it—If you can get a peep at Babbicomb before you leave the country, do.—I think it the finest place I have seen, or is to be seen in the South.<sup>1</sup> There is a Cottage there I took warm water at, that made up for the tea. I have lately skirk'd some friends of ours, and I advise you to do the same, I mean the blue-devils—I am never at home to them. You need not fear them while you remain in Devonshire. there will be some of the family waiting for you at the Coach office—but go by another Coach.—

I shall beg leave to have a third opinion in the first discussion you have with Woodhouse—just half-way—between both. You know I will not give up my argument—In my walk today I stoop'd under a rail way<sup>2</sup> that lay across my path, and ask'd myself “Why I did not get over” Because, answered I, “no one wanted to force you under—” I would give a guinea to be a reasonable man—good sound sense—a says what he thinks, and does what he says man—and did not take snuff. They say men near death however mad they may have been, come to their senses—I hope I shall here in this letter—there is a decent space to be very sensible in—many a good proverb has been in less—nay, I

<sup>1</sup> This and the passage at the end of the letter about Devonshire read as if Keats had after all carried away a much more lasting impression of the beauties and advantages of the county than might be expected from his invectives against the moisture of the climate when he was at Teignmouth with Tom.—H.B.F.

<sup>2</sup> So in Woodhouse's transcript, but Lord Houghton reads 'railing'.

have heard of the statutes at large being chang'd into the Statutes at Small and printed for a watch paper.

Your sisters by this time must have got the Devonshire ees—short ees—you know 'em—they are the prettiest ees in the Language. O how I admire the middle-siz'd delicate Devonshire girls of about 15. There was one at an Inn door holding a quartern of brandy—the very thought of her kept me warm a whole stage—and a 16 miler too—"You'll pardon me for being jocular."

Ever your affectionate friend  
John Keats—

152. To RICHARD WOODHOUSE. *Tuesday 21 Sept 1819.*

*Address:* To Mr Rich<sup>d</sup> Woodhouse | 8. Duke Street | Bath.

*Postmark:* WINCHESTER 22 SE 1819

Tuesday—

Dear Woodhouse,

If you see what I have said to Reynolds before you come to your own dose you will put it between the bars unread; provided they have begun fires in Bath—I should like a bit of fire to night—one likes a bit of fire—How glorious the Blacksmiths' shops look now. I stood to night before one till I was verry near listing for one. Yes I should like a bit of fire—at a distance about 4 feet 'not quite hob nob'<sup>1</sup>—as wordsworth says. The fact was I left Town on Wednesday—determined to be in a hurry. You don't eat travelling—you're wrong—beef—beef—I like the look of a sign. The Coachman's face says eat eat, eat. I never feel more contemptible than when I am sitting by a goodlooking coachman. One is nothing—Perhaps I eat to persuade myself I am somebody. You must be when slice after slice—but it wont do—the Coachman nibbles a bit of bread—he's favour'd—he's had a Call—a Hercules Methodist—Does he live by bread alone?<sup>2</sup> O that I were a Stage Manager—perhaps that's as old as 'doubling the Cape.' "How are ye old 'un? hey! why dont'e speak?" O that I had so sweet a Breast to sing as the Coachman hath!<sup>3</sup> I'd give a penny for his Whistle—and bow to the Girls on the road—Bow—nonsense—'tis a nameless graceful slang action. Its effect on the women suited to it must be delightful. It touches 'em in the ribs—en passant—very

<sup>1</sup> 'The Idiot Boy', l. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. St. Matthew, iv. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'Twelfth Night', ii. iii. 22-3.

off hand—very fine—Sed thongum formosa vale vale  
inquit Heigh ho la!<sup>1</sup> You like Poetry better—so you shall  
have some I was going to give Reynolds.

Season of Mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
The vines with fruit that round the thatch e(a)ves run;  
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazle-shells  
With a white kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more later flowers for the bees  
Untill they think wa(r)m days will never cease  
For summer has o'er brimm'd the(i)r clammy Cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft, amid thy store?<sup>2</sup>  
Sometimes, whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;  
Or on a half reap'd furrow sound asleep,  
Dased with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;  
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
Steady<sup>3</sup> thy laden head across a brook;  
Or by a Cyder press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Aye, Where are they?  
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too.  
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day  
And touch the stubble plains with rosy hue:  
Then in a wailful quire the small gnats mourn  
Among the river shallows, borne aloft  
Or sinking as the light wind lives and dies;  
And full grown Lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn:  
Hedge crickets sing, and now with treble soft  
The Redbreast whistles from a garden Croft  
And gather'd Swallows twitter in the Skies—<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Virgil, Ecl. iii. 79, 'et longum Formose, vale, vale, inquit, Iolla'.

<sup>2</sup> Keats wrote 'stores'.

<sup>3</sup> Here he wrote 'Steady'.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Meredith's 'Modern Love', xlvii, 1, 'We saw the swallows gathering in the sky'.



I will give you a few lines from Hyperion on account of a word in the last line of a fine sound—

Mortal! that thou may'st understand aright  
 I humanize my sayings to thine ear,  
 Making comparisons of earthly things;  
 Or thou might'st better listen to the wind  
 Though it blows *legend-laden* th(r)ough the trees.<sup>1</sup>

I think you will like the following description of the Temple of Saturn—

I look'd around upon the carved sides  
 Of an old Sanctuary, with roof august  
 Builded so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds  
 Might sail beneath, as o'er the stars of heaven.  
 So old the place was I remember none  
 The like upon the earth; what I had seen  
 Of grey Cathedrals, buttress'd walls, rent towers  
 The superan(n)uations of sunk realms,  
 Or nature's rocks hard toil'd in winds and waves,  
 Seem'd but the failing of decrepit things  
 To that eternal-domed monument.  
 Upon the marble, at my feet, there lay  
 Store of strange vessels and large draperies  
 Which needs had been of dyed asbestus wove,  
 Or in that place the moth could not corrupt,  
 So white the linen, so, in some, distinct  
 Ran imageries from a sombre loom.  
 All in a mingled heap confused there lay  
 Robes, golden tongs, censer and chafing dish  
 Girdles, and chains and holy jewelries.  
 Turning from these, with awe once more I rais'd  
 My eyes to fathom the space every way;  
 The embossed roof, the silent massive range  
 Of Columns north and south, ending in Mist  
 Of nothing; then to the eastward where black gates  
 Were shut against the Sunrise evermore.<sup>2</sup>

I see I have completely lost my direction. So I e'n make you pay double postage. I had begun a sonnet

<sup>1</sup> 'The Fall of Hyperion', canto ii, ll. 1-6; l. 5—'Whose language is to thee a barren noise,'—is lacking in the holograph.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Fall of Hyperion', canto i, ll. 61-86.

in french of Ronsard—on my word 'tis verry capable of poetry<sup>1</sup>—I was stop'd by a circumstance not worth mentioning—I intended to call it *La Platonique Chevalresque*—I like the second line—

Non ne suis si audace a languire  
De m'empresser au cœur vos tendres mains. &c

Here is what I had written for a sort of induction—

Fanatics have their dreams wherewith they weave  
A Paradise for a Sect; the savage too  
From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep  
Guesses at Heaven: pity these have not  
Trac'd upon vellum or wild indian leaf  
The shadows of melodious utterance:  
But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die,  
For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,  
With the fine spell of words alone can save  
Imagination from the sable charm  
And dumb enchantment.<sup>2</sup>

My Poetry will never be fit for any thing it does n't cover its ground well. You see he she is off her guard and does n't move a peg though Prose is coming up in an awkward style enough. Now a blow in the spondee will finish her—But let it get over this line of circumvallation<sup>3</sup> if it can. These are unpleasant Phrase(s).

Now for all this you two must write me a letter apiece—for as I know you will interread one another. I am still writing to Reynolds as well as yourself. As I say to George I am writing *to* you but *at* your Wife—<sup>4</sup> And don't forget to tell Reynolds of the fairy tale Undine.<sup>5</sup> Ask him if he

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 19, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Fall of Hyperion', canto i, ll. 1-11.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'The Spectator', No. 127. The whole of this paragraph is written on the outer side of the page at right angles to the 'Hyperion' extract from which it is separated by a 'line of circumvallation' curved to suit the length of the verse lines.

<sup>4</sup> See Letter 156, pp. 417-18, where he uses this phrase.

<sup>5</sup> 'Undine; a Romance', translated from the German of Baron de la Motte Fouqué by George Soane, was published in London in June 1818.

has read any of the American Brown's<sup>1</sup> novels that Hazlitt speaks so much of—I have read one call'd *Wieland*—very powerful—something like Godwin. Between Schiller and Godwin. A Domestic prototype of S(c)hiller's *Armenian*.<sup>2</sup> More clever in plot and incident than Godwin. A strange american scion of the German trunk. Powerful genius—accomplish'd horrors—I shall proceed tomorrow. Wednesday—I am all in a Mess here—embowell'd in Winchester. I wrote two Letters to Brown one from said Place, and one from London, and neither of them has reach'd him.<sup>3</sup> I have written him a long one this morning and am so perplex'd as to be an object to Curiosity to you quiet People. I hire myself a show waggan and trumpetour. Here's the wonderful Man whose Letters wont go!—All the infernal imaginarry thunderstorms from the Post office are beating upon me—so that 'unpoeted I write.'<sup>4</sup> Some curious body has detained my Letters. I am sure of it. They know not what to make of me—not an acquaintance in the Place—what can I be about? so they open my Letters. Being in a lodging house, and not so self will'd, but I am a little cowardly I dare not spout my rage against the Ceiling. Besides I should be run through the Body by the major in the next room. I don't think his wife would attempt such a thing.<sup>5</sup> Now I am going to be serious. After revolving certain circumstances in my Mind; chiefly connected with a late american letter I have determined to take up my abode in a cheap Lodging in Town and get employment in some of our elegant Periodical Works. I will no longer live upon hopes. I shall carry my plan into execution speedily—I shall live in Westminster—from which a walk to the British Museum will be noisy and muddy—but otherwise pleasant enough I shall enquire of Hazlitt how the figures of the market stand. O that I could <write> som(e)thing agrestunal, pleasant, fountain-vo(i)c'd—not plague you with unconnected nonsense—But things won't leave me *alone*. I shall be in Town as soon as either of you. I only wait for an answer from Brown: if

<sup>1</sup> Charles Brockden Brown (1771–1810): '*Wieland: or, the Transformation*' was published in 1798.

<sup>2</sup> The principal character in Schiller's novel '*Geisterseher*'.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 156 (24 September 1819), p. 425.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. '*King Lear*', III. i. 14, 'unbonneted he runs', in a thunderstorm.

<sup>5</sup> This unnamed major and his wife appear again in the September journal letter to George Keats, No. 156, p. 428.

he receives mine which is now a very moot point. I will give you a few reasons why I shall persist in not publishing The Pot of Basil. ~~It is too~~ smokeable. I can get it smook'd at the Carpenters shaving chimney much more cheaply—There is too much inexperience of live (*for* life), and simplicity of knowledge in it—which might do very well after one's death—but not while one is alive. There are very few would look to the reality. I intend to use more finesse with the Public. It is possible to write fine things which cannot be laugh'd at in any way. Isabella is what I should call were I a reviewer 'A weak-sided Poem' with an amusing sober-sadness about it. Not that I do not think Reynolds and you are quite right about it—it is enough for me. But this will not do to be public. If I may so say, in my dramatic capacity I enter fully into the feeling: but in *Propria Persona* I should be apt to quiz it myself—There is no objection of this kind to *Lamia*—A good deal to *St. Agnes Eve*—only not so glaring—Would as I say I could write you something *sylvestran*. But I have no time to think: I am an *otiosus-peroccupatus Man*. I think upon crutches, like the folks in your Pump room. Have you seen old Bramble<sup>1</sup> yet—they say he's on his last legs. The gout did not treat the old Man well so the Physician superseded it, and put the dropsy in office, who gets very fat upon his new employment, and behaves worse than the other to the old Man—But he'll have his house about his ears soon. We shall have another fall of Siege-arms. I suppose Mr<sup>s</sup> Humphrey<sup>1</sup> persists in a big-belley—poor thing she little thinks how she is spo(i)ling the corners of her mouth—and making her nose quite a pimity. Mr Humphrey I hear was giving a Lecture in the gaming-room—when some one call'd out Spousey! I hear too he has received a challenge from a gentleman who lost that evening. The fact is Mr H. is a mere nothing out of his Bedroom.<sup>2</sup> Old Tabitha died in being bolstered up for a whist-party. They had to cut again—Chowder died long ago—Mr<sup>s</sup> H. laments that the last last time they *put him* (i.e. to breed) he didn't take. They say he was a direct

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Bramble, Mrs. Humphry Clinker (née Winifred Jenkins) and Tabitha Bramble are characters in Smollett's 'Humphry Clinker' (1771). Chowder was Tabitha Bramble's dog. Keats here is imagining a continuation of Smollett's story.

<sup>2</sup> This word is doubtful. The Rev. M. R. Ridley suggests 'Bed' in preference to 'Bath', 'Rod', or 'Roll', and I think he is right.

descendent of Cupid and Veney in the Spectator. This may be easily known by the Parish Books. If you do not write in the course of a day or two—direct to me at Rice's. Let me know how you pass your times and how you are.

Your sincere friend

John Keats—

Hav'nt heard from Taylor—

153. To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE. *Wednesday 22 Sept. 1819.*

Address: Charles W. Dilke Esq<sup>re</sup> | Navy Pay Office | Somerset House | London.

*No Postmark.*

Winchester Wednesday Eve.

My dear Dilke,

Whatever I take too for the time I cannot l(e)ave off in a hur(r)y; letter writing is the go now; I have consumed a Quire at least. You must give me credit, now, for a free Letter when it is in real(i)ty an interested one, on two points, the one requestive, the other verging to the pros and cons—As I expect they will lead me to seeing and conferring with you in a short time, I shall not enter at all upon a letter I have lately received<sup>1</sup> from George of not the most comfortable intelligence: but proceed to these two points, which if you can theme out in sexions and subsexions,<sup>2</sup> for my edification, you will oblige me. The first I shall begin upon, the other will follow like a tail to a Comet. I have written to Brown on the subject, and can but go over the same Ground with you in a very short time, it not being more in length than the ordinary paces between the Wickets. It concerns a resolution I have taken to endeavour to acqu(i)re something by temporary writing in periodical works. You must agree with me how unwise it is to keep feeding upon hopes, which depending so much

153. I suppose the original letter, though in Sir Charles Dilke's possession, was not sent; for it bears no trace of any postmark; and Keats talks of not sending it, in his second letter to Brown of the 23rd of September 1819. It seems likely that the short letter of the 1st of October to Dilke was sent instead of this longer one.—H.B.F.

<sup>1</sup> On the 10th of September, see Letter 150, pp. 382–3.

<sup>2</sup> Keats was reading Burton's 'Anatomy', a book divided into Parts, Sections, Members, and Subsections. Cf. Letter 156, pp. 404, 420.

on the state of temper and imagination, appear gloomy or bright, near or afar off just as it happens—Now an act has three parts—to act, to do, and to perform<sup>1</sup>—I mean I should *do* something for my immediate welfare—Even if I am swept away like a Spider from a drawing room I am determined to spin—home spun any thing for sale. Yea I will traf(f)ic. Any thing but Mortgage<sup>2</sup> my Brain to Blackwood. I am determined not to layie like a dead lump.<sup>3</sup> If Reynolds had not taken to the law, would he not be earning something? Why cannot I. You may say I want tact—that is easily acqui(r)ed. You may be up to the slang of a cock pit in three battles. It is fortunate I have not before this been tempted to venture on the common. I should a year or two ago have spoken my mind on every subject with the utmost simplicity. I hope I have learnt a little better and am confident I shall be able to cheat as well as any literary Jew of the Market and shine up an article on any thing without much knowle(d)ge of the subject, aye like an orange. I would willingly have recourse to other means. I cannot; I am fit for nothing but literature. Wait for the issue of this Tragedy? No—there cannot be greater uncertainties east west, north, and south than concerning dramatic composition. How many months must I wait! Had I not better begin to look about me now? If better events supersede this necessity what harm will be done? I have no trust whatever on Poetry. I dont wonder at it—the ma(r)vel it (for is) to me how people read so much of it. I think you will see the reasonableness of my plan. To forward it I purpose living in cheap Lodging in Town, that I may be in the reach of books and information, of which there is here a plentiful lack.<sup>4</sup> If I can (find) any place tolerably comf(o)rtable I will settle myself and fag till I can afford to buy Pleasure—which if (I) never can afford I must go without. Talking of Pleasure, this moment I was writing with one hand, and with the other holding to my Mouth a Nectarine—good god how fine. It went down soft pulpy, slushy, oozy—all its delicious embonpoint melted down my throat like a large beatified Strawberry. I shall certainly breed. Now I come to my request. Should you like me for a neighbour again? Come, plump it out, I wont blush. I should also

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Hamlet', v. i. 11–13.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 156, pp. 398 and 423.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 154, p. 396.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 'Hamlet', ii. ii. 205.

be in the neighbourhood of M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie, which I shou(1)d be glad of, though that of course does not influence me. Therefore will you look about Marsham, or rodney<sup>1</sup> street for a couple of rooms for me. Rooms like the gallants legs in massingers time "as good as the times allow, Sir." I have written to day to Reynolds, and to Woodhouse. Do you know him? He is a Friend of Taylors at whom Brown has taken one of his funny odd dislikes. I'm sure he's wrong, because Woodhouse likes my Poetry—conclusive. I ask your opinion and yet I must say to you as to him, Brown that if you have any thing to say against it I shall be as obstinate & heady as a Radical. By the Examiner coming in your hand writing you must be in Town. They have put <me> into spirits: Notwithstand<ing> my aristocratic temper I cannot help being verry much pleas'd with the present public proceedings. I hope sincerely I shall be able to put a Mite of help to the Liberal side of the Question before I die. If you should have left Town again (for your Holidays cannot be up yet) let me know—when this is forwarded to you—A most extraordinary mischance has befallen two Letters I wrote Brown<sup>2</sup>—one from London whither I was obliged to go on business for George;<sup>3</sup> the other from this place since my return. I cant make it out. I am excessively sorry for it. I shall hear from Brown and from you almost together for I have sent him a Letter to day: you must positively agree with me or by the delicate toe nails of the virgin I will not open your Letters. If they are as David says 'suspicious looking letters'<sup>4</sup> I wont open them. If St. John had been half as cunning he might have seen the revelations comfortably in his own room, without giving Angels the trouble of breaking open seals.<sup>5</sup> Remember me to M<sup>rs</sup> D.—and the Westmonisteranian and believe me

Ever your sincere friend

John Keats—

<sup>1</sup> C. W. Dilke puts a quære against this name, and suggests 'Romney'. That was probably what Keats meant; but what he wrote was 'rodney', with a small r.

<sup>2</sup> Neither of them extant so far as I am aware.

<sup>3</sup> On the 10th of September, see Letter 150, pp. 382-3.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 'The Rivals', iv. i. *David*: '... a designing and malicious-looking letter'.

<sup>5</sup> Revelation, v and vi.

154. To CHARLES BROWN. Thursday 23 Sept. 1819.

Address and postmark not recorded.

(Winchester) 23 September 1819.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now I am going to enter on the subject of self. It is quite time I should set myself doing something, and live no longer upon hopes. I have never yet exerted myself. I am getting into an idle minded, vicious way of life, almost content to live upon others. In no period of my life have I acted with any self will, but in throwing up the apothecary-profession. That I do not repent of. Look at xxxxxx:<sup>1</sup> if he was not in the law he would be acquiring, by his abilities, something towards his support. My occupation is entirely literary; I will do so too. I will write, on the liberal side of the question, for whoever will pay me. I have not known yet what it is to be diligent. I purpose<sup>2</sup> living in town in a cheap lodging, and endeavouring, for a beginning, to get the theatricals of some paper. When I can afford to compose deliberate poems I will. I shall be in expectation of an answer to this. Look on my side of the question. I am convinced I am right. Suppose the Tragedy<sup>3</sup> should succeed,—there will be no harm done. And here I will take an opportunity of making a remark or two on our friendship, and all your good offices to me. I have a natural timidity of mind in these matters: liking better to take the feeling ~~for~~ between us for granted, than to speak of it. But, good God! what a short while you have known me! I feel it a sort of duty ~~thus~~ thus to recapitulate, however unpleasant it may be to you. You have been living for others more than any man I know. This is a vexation to me; because it has been depriving you, in the very prime of your life, of pleasures which it was your duty to procure. As I am speaking in general terms this may appear nonsense; you perhaps will not understand it: but if you can go over, day by day, any month of the last year,—you will know what I mean. On the whole, however, this is a subject that I cannot express myself upon. I speculate upon it frequently; and, believe me, the end

<sup>1</sup> Brown left the name blank in the transcript, but that Reynolds was referred to is certain. See Letter 153, p. 393.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Bodurtha and Mr. Pope read *propose*, but Brown's transcript has *purpose*.

<sup>3</sup> 'Otho the Great'.





thoughts, but to occupy them pleasantly; for, I assure you, I am as far from being unhappy as possible. Imaginary grievances have always been ~~my~~ more my torment than real ones. You know this well. Real ones will never have any other effect upon me than to stimulate me to get out of or avoid them. This is easily accounted for. Our imaginary woes are conjured up by our passions, and are fostered by passionate feeling; our real ones come of themselves, and are opposed by an abstract exertion of mind. Real grievances are displacers of passion. The imaginary nail a man down for a sufferer, as on a cross; the real spur him up into an agent.<sup>1</sup> I wish, at one view, you could see my heart towards you. 'Tis only from a high tone of feeling that I can put that word upon paper—out of poetry. I ought to have waited for your answer to my last<sup>2</sup> before I ~~send~~ wrote this. I felt, however, compelled to make a rejoinder to your's. I had written to x x x x<sup>3</sup> on the subject of my last,—I scarcely know whether I shall send my letter now. I think he would approve of my plan; it is so evident. Nay, I am convinced, out and out, that by prosing for a while in periodical works I may maintain myself decently.

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156. To GEORGE AND GEORGINA KEATS.

*Friday 17—Monday 27 Sept. 1819.*

*No address or postmark.*

Winchester Sept<sup>r</sup> Friday.

My dear George,

I was closely employed in reading and composition, in this place, whither I had come from Shanklin, for the

expressed himself most averse to writing for any periodical publication. The short contributions to the "Champion" were rather acts of friendship than literary labours. But now Mr. Brown, knowing what his pecuniary circumstances were, and painfully conscious that the time spent in the creation of those works which were destined to be the delight and solace of thousands of his fellow-creatures, must be unprofitable to him in procuring the necessities of life, and, above all, estimating at its due value that spirit of independence which shrinks from materialising the obligations of friendship into daily bread, gave every encouragement to these designs, and only remonstrated against the project of taking a solitary lodging in Westminster, 'on account of the pain he would himself suffer from the privation of Keats's society,' and 'from the belief that the scheme of life would not be successful'.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 156, pp. 398–9, for imaginary and real ills, the latter a spur.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. Letter 154.

<sup>3</sup> Letter 153.

convenience of a library, when I received your last, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>. You will have seen by the short Letter I wrote from Shanklin<sup>1</sup> how matters stand between us and M<sup>rs</sup> Jennings. They had not at all mov'd and I knew no way of overcoming the inveterate obstinacy of our affairs. On receiving your last I immediately took a place in the same night's coach for London.<sup>2</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Abbey behaved extremely well to me, appointed Monday evening at 7 to meet me and observed that he should drink tea at that hour. I gave him the inclosed note<sup>3</sup> and showed him the last leaf of yours to me. He really appeared anxious about it; promised he would forward your money as quickly as possible. I think I mention'd that Walton<sup>4</sup> was dead—He will apply to M<sup>r</sup> Gliddon the partner; endeavour to get rid of M<sup>rs</sup> Jennings's claim and be expeditious. He has received an answer from my Letter to Fry<sup>5</sup>—that is something. We are certainly in a very low estate: I say we, for I am in such a situation that were it not for the assistance of Brown & Taylor I must be as badly off as a Man can be. I could not raise any sum by the promise of any Poem—no, not by the mortgage of my intellect. We must wait a little while. I really have hopes of success. I have finish'd a Tragedy<sup>6</sup> which if it succeeds will enable me to sell what I may have in manuscript to a good a<d>vantage. I have pass'd my time in reading, writing and fretting—the last I intend to give up and stick to the other two. They are the only chances of benefit to us. Your wants will be a fresh spur<sup>7</sup> to me. I assure you you shall more than share what I can get, whilst I am still young—the time may come when age will make me more selfish. I have not been well treated by the world—and yet I have capitally well. I do not know a Person to whom so many purse strings would fly open as to me—if I could possibly take advantage of them—which I cannot do for none of the owners of these purses are rich. Your present situation I will not suffer myself to dwell upon—when misfortunes are so real

<sup>1</sup> Not extant so far as I know.

<sup>2</sup> On the 10th of September.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably from George Keats to Abbey, enclosed to John.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly William Walton, attorney, of Girdlers' Hall, 39 Basinghall Street.

<sup>5</sup> Not extant. Possibly Thomas Fry, stock-broker, of 4 Angel Court, Throgmorton Street, mentioned again at the end of Letter 167, p. 443.

<sup>6</sup> 'Otho the Great.'

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Letter 155, p. 397.

we are glad enough to escape them, and the thought of them. I cannot help thinking Mr Audubon<sup>1</sup> a dishonest man. Why did he make you believe that he was a Man of Property? How is it his circumstances have altered so suddenly? In truth I do not believe you fit to deal with the world, or at least the american mould.<sup>2</sup> But good God—who can avoid these chances—You have done your best—Take matters as coolly as you can, and confidently expecting help from England, act as if no help was nigh. Mine I am sure is a tolerable tragedy—it would have been a bank to me, if just as I had finish'd it I had not heard of Kean's resolution to go to America. That was the worst news I could have had. There is no actor can do the principal character<sup>3</sup> besides Kean. At Covent Garden there is a great chance of its being damn'd. Were it to succeed even there it would lift me out of the mire. I mean the mire of a bad reputation which is continually rising against me. My name with the literary fashionables is vulgar—I am a weaver boy<sup>4</sup> to them—a Tragedy would lift me out of this mess. And mess it is as far as it regards our Pockets. But be not cast down any more than I am; I feel I can bear real ills better than imaginary ones.<sup>5</sup> Whenever I find myself growing vapourish, I rouse myself, wash and put on a clean shirt brush my hair and clothes, tie my shoestrings neatly and in fact adonize as I were going out—then all clean and comfortable I sit down to write.<sup>6</sup> This I find the greatest relief—Besides I am becoming accustom'd to the privations of the pleasures of sense. In the midst of the world I live like a Hermit. I have forgot how to lay plans for enjoyment of any Pleasure. I feel I can bear any thing,—any misery, even imprisonment—so long as I have neither wife nor child. Perhaps you will say yours are your only comfort—they must be. I return'd to Winchester the day before yesterday<sup>7</sup> and am now here alone, for Brown some days before I left,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Speed says, 'Audubon, the naturalist, sold to George Keats a boat loaded with merchandise, which at the time of the sale Audubon knew to be at the bottom of the Mississippi River.'

<sup>2</sup> Previously printed as world, but Keats wrote mould.

<sup>3</sup> The part of Ludolph.

<sup>4</sup> See the reference to the cotton-spinners' strike in this letter under date the 24th of September, p. 427.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Letter 155, p. 397.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 'Tristram Shandy', Book ix, Chap. xiii.

<sup>7</sup> i.e. Wednesday the 15th of September: see Letter 152, p. 386.

went to Bedhampton and there he will be for the next fortnight. The term of his house<sup>1</sup> will be up in the middle of next month when we shall return to Hampstead. On Sunday I dined with your Mother and Hen and Charles in Henrietta Street—M<sup>rs</sup> and Miss Millar were in the Country. Charles had been but a few days returned from Paris. I dare say you will have letters expressing the motives of his Journey. M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie and Miss Waldegrave seem as quiet as two Mice there alone. I did not show your last—I thought it better not. For better times will certainly come and why should they be unhappy in the meantime. On Monday Morning I went to Walthamstow. Fanny look'd better than I had seen her for some time. She complains of ~~my~~ not hearing from you appealing to me as if it was half my fault. I had been so long in retirement that London appeared a very odd place. I could not make out I had so many acquaintance, and it was a whole day before I could feel among Men. I had another strange sensation there was not one house I felt any pleasure to call at. Reynolds was in the Country and saving himself I am p(re)judiced against all that family.<sup>2</sup> Dilke and his wife and child were in the Country. Taylor was at Nottingham. I was out and every body was out. I walk'd about the Streets as in a strange land. Rice was the only one at home. I pass'd some time with him. I know him better since we have liv'd a month together in the isle of Wight. He is the most sensible, and even wise Man I know—he has a few John Bull prejudices; but they improve him. His illness is at times alarming. We are great friends, and there is no one I like to pass a day with better. Martin call'd in to bid him good bye before he set out for Dublin. If you would like to hear one of his jokes here is one which at the time we laugh'd at a good deal. A Miss —— with three young Ladies, one of them Martin's sister had come a gadding in the Isle of Wight and took for a few days a Cottage opposite ours—we dined with them one day, and as I was saying they had fish. Miss —— said she thought *they tasted of the boat*. No says Martin very seriously they haven't been kept

<sup>1</sup> Brown was in the habit of letting his house in Wentworth Place, where he and Keats domesticated together, and he generally arranged to go off on country trips during those terms for which the house was thus profitably employed.

<sup>2</sup> The matter of Miss Cox was probably still fresh in his recollection. See Letter 94, pp. 231–2.

long enough. I saw Haslam he is very much occupied with love and business being one of M<sup>r</sup> Saunders executors and Lover to a young woman. He show'd me her Picture by Severn. I think she is, though not very cunning, too cunning for him. Nothing strikes me so forcibly with a sense of the ridiculous as love.<sup>1</sup> A Man in love I do think cuts the sorryest figure in the world. Even when I know a poor fool to be really in pain about it, I could burst out laughing in his face. His pathetic visage becomes irrisistable. Not that I take Haslam as a pattern for Lovers—he is a very worthy man and a good friend. His love is very amusing. Somewhere in the Spectator is related an account of a Man inviting a party of stutter(e)rs and squinters to his table. 't would please me more to scrape together a party of Lovers, not to dinner—no to tea. The(re) would be no fighting as among Knights of old.

Pensive they sit, and roll their languid eyes.  
 Nibble their to(a)sts, and cool their tea with sighs,  
 Or else forget the purpose of the night  
 Forget their tea—forget their appetite.  
 See with cross'd arms they sit—ah hapless crew  
 The fire is going out, and no one rings  
 For coals, and therefore no coals betty brings.  
 A Fly is in the milk pot—must he die  
 Circled by a humane Society?  
 No no there m<sup>r</sup> Werter<sup>2</sup> takes his spoon  
 Inverts it—dips the handle and lo, soon  
 The little struggler sav'd from perils dark  
 Across the teaboard draws a long wet mark.  
 Romeo! Arise! take Snuffers by the handle  
 There's a large Cauliflower in each candle.  
 A winding-sheet—Ah me! I must away  
 To no 7 just beyond the Circus gay.  
 'Alas! my friend! your Coat sits very well:  
 Where may your Taylor live?' 'I may not tell—  
 'O pardon me—I'm absent: now and then.'  
 Where *might* my Taylor live?—I say again  
 I cannot tell—let me no more be teas'd—  
 He lives in wapping *might* live where he pleas'd.

You see I cannot get on without writing as boys do at

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 134, p. 352.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe's 'Sorrows of Werther' (1774).

school a few nonsense verses. I begin them and before I have written six the whim has pass'd—if there is any thing deserving so respectable a name in them. I shall put in a bit of information any where just as it strikes me. Mr Abbey is to write to me as soon as he can bring matters to bear and then I am to go to Town to tell him the means of forwarding to you through Capper and Hazlewood. I wonder I did not put this before. I shall go on to-morrow—it is so fine now I must take a bit of a walk.

Saturday (18 September)—

With my inconstant disposition it is no wonder that this morning, amid all our bad times and misfortunes, I should feel so alert and well spirited. At this moment you are perhaps in a very different state of Mind. It is because my hopes are very paramount to my despair. I have been reading over a part of a short poem I have composed lately call'd 'Lamia'—and I am certain there is that sort of fire in it which must take hold of people in some way—give them either pleasant or unpleasant sensation. What they want is a sensation of some sort. I wish I could pitch the Key of your spirits as high as mine is—but your organ loft is beyond the reach of my voice. I admire the exact admeasurement of my niece in your Mother's letter—O the little span long elf.<sup>1</sup> I am not in the least (a) judge of the proper weight and size of an infant. Never trouble yourselves about that: she is sure to be a fine woman. Let her have only delicate nails both on hands and feet and teeth as small as a May-fly's—who will live you his life on a square inch of oak-leaf. And nails she must have quite different from the market women here who plough into the butter and make a quarter pound taste of it. I intend to w(r)ite a letter to you(r) Wifie and there I may say more on this little plump subject—I hope she's plump. 'Still harping on my daughter'<sup>2</sup> This Winchester is a place tolerably well suited to me; there is a fine Cathedral, a College, a Roman-Catholic Chapel, a Methodist do, an independent do,—and there is not one loom or any thing like manufacturing beyond bread & butter in the whole City. There are a number of rich Catholic(s) in the place. It is a respectable, ancient aristocratical place—and more-

<sup>1</sup> Ben Jonson, 'The Sad Shepherd', II. viii.

<sup>2</sup> 'Hamlet', II. ii. 190.

over it contains a nunnery. Our set are by no means so hail fellow, well met, on literary subjects as we were wont to be. Reynolds has turn'd to the law. By the bye, he brought out a little piece at the Lyceum call'd *one, two, three, four, by advertisement*.<sup>1</sup> It met with complete success. The meaning of this odd title is explained when I tell you the principal actor is a mimic who takes off four of our best performers in the course of the farce. Our Stage is loaded with mimics. I did not see the Piece being out of Town the whole time it was in progress. Dilke is entirely swallowed up in his boy: 'tis really lamentable to what a pitch he carries a sort of parental mania. I had a Letter from him at Shanklin. He went on a word or two about the isle of Wight which is a bit of <a> hobby horse of his; but he soon deviated to his boy. 'I am sitting' says he "at the window expecting my Boy from School." I suppose I told you somewhere that he lives in Westminster, and his boy goes to the School there, where he gets beaten, and every bruise he has and I dare say deserves is very bitter to Dilke. The Place I am speaking of, puts me in mind of a circumstance <which> occurred lately at Dilkes. I think it very rich and dramatic and quite illustrative of the little quiet fun that he will enjoy sometimes. First I must tell you their house is at the corner of Great Smith Street, so that some of the windows look into one Street, and the back windows into another round the corner. Dilke had some old people to dinner, I know not who—but there were two old ladies among them—Brown was there—they

<sup>1</sup> The title of the piece in question is 'One, Two, Three, Four, Five: By Advertisement, a Musical Entertainment in one Act'. It was published in 1819 in a demy 8vo pamphlet with a portrait of John Reeve by Wageman, and it held the stage firmly enough to be included later in Cumberland's 'British Theatre', where it is stated that the play was written for John Reeve, and brought out at the English Opera, with him in the principal part, on the 17th of July 1819. The following abstract of the fable is added:—"Mr Coupleton wishing to retire from the bustle and turmoil of a city life, and enjoy the country and spring-tide, "*solus cum sola* with his lovely May," advertises for a husband for his daughter; a young lady of a *thousand* in point of *mental* accomplishments, and of *ten thousand* in a *pecuniary* sense. Miss Sophy, however, anticipating her papa, has secured to herself a lover, in the person of Harry Alias, a theatrical amateur. To punish the match-maker for his indecorous mode of proceeding in an affair of so much delicacy, and promote his own views, Mr Alias resolves to answer the advertisement, by waiting upon Old Coupleton in a variety of characters; and Sir Peter Teazle, Dr Endall, Sam Dabbs, and Buskin, appear successively before him, in the persons of "Farren", "Harley", "Munden", and "Mathews", all of whom were aped with wonderful fidelity. In Buskin, Mr Reeve also introduced imitations of "John Kemble", "Kean", and "Liston".



had know him from a Child. Brown is very pleasant with old women, and on that day, it seems, behaved himself so winningly they *(for that)* they became hand and glove together and a little complimentary. Brown was obliged to depart early. He bid them good bye and pass'd into the passage—no sooner was his back turn'd than the old women began lauding him. When Brown had reach'd the Street door and was just going, Dilke threw up the Window and call'd: 'Brown! Brown! They say you look younger than ever you did!' Brown went on and had just turn'd the corner into the other street when Dilke appeared at the back window crying "Brown! Brown! By God, they say you're handsome!" You see what a many words it requires to give any identity to a thing I could have told you in half a minute. I have been reading lately Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy; and I think you will be very much amused with a page I here copy for you. I call it a Feu de joie round the batteries of Fort St<sup>e</sup>. Hyphen-de-Phrase on the birthday of the Digamma. The whole alphabet was drawn up in a Phalanx on the cover of an old Dictionary. Band playing "Amo, Amas, &c."

"Every Lover admires his Mistress, though she be very deformed of herself, ill-favored, wrinkled, pimpled, pale, red, yellow, tann'd, tallow-fac'd, have a swoln juglers platter face, or a thin, lean, chitty face, have clouds in her face, be crooked, dry, bald, goggle-eyed, blear-eyed or with staring eyes, she looks like a squis'd cat, hold her head still awry, heavy, dull, hollow-eyed, black or yellow about the eyes, or squint-eyed, sparrow-mouth'd, Persean hook-nosed, have a sharp fox nose, a red nose, China flat, great nose, nare simo patuloque, a nose like a promontory, gubber-tush'd, rotten teeth, black, uneven, brown teeth, beetle-brow'd, a witches beard, her breath stink all over the room, her nose drop winter and summer, with a Bavarian poke under her chin, a sharp chin, lave-eared, with a long crane's neck, which stands awry too, pendulis mammis, her dugs like two double jugs, or else no dugs in the other extream, bloody falln fingers, she have filthy, long, unpaired, nails, scabbed hands or wrists, a tan'd skin, a rotton carcass, crooked back, she stoops, is lame, splea footed, as slender in the middle as a cow in the wast, gowty legs, her ankles hang over her shooes, her feet stink, she breed lice, a meer changeling, a very monster, an

aufe imperfect, her whole complexion savors, an harsh voice, incondite gesture, vile gate, a vast virago, or an ugly tit, a slug, a fat fustilugs, a trusse, a long lean raw-bone, a Skeleton, a Sneaker (si qua latent<sup>1</sup> meliora puta) and to thy Judgement looks like a mard in a Lanthorn, whom thou couldst not fancy for a world, but hatest, loathest, and wouldst have spit in her face, or blow thy nose in her bosom, remedium amoris to another man, a dowdy, a Slut, a scold, a nasty rank, rammy, filthy, beastly quean, dishonest peradventure, obscene, base, beggarly, rude, foolish, untaught—peevisish, Irus' daughter, Ther-site's sister, Grobian's Scholler; if he love her once, he admires her for all this, he takes no notice of any such errors or imperfections of boddy or mind." There's a dose for you—fine!! I would give my favourite leg to have written this as a speech in a Play: with what effect could Matthews pop-gun it at the pit! This I think will amuse you more than so much Poetry. Of that I do not like to copy any as I am affraid it is too mal apropos for you at present—and yet I will send you some—for by the time you receive it things in England may have taken a different turn. When I left M<sup>r</sup> Abbey on monday evening I walk'd up Cheapside but returned to put some letters in the Post and met him again in Bucklersbury: we walk'd together th<sup>r</sup>ough the Poultry as far as the hatter's shop he has some concern in. He spoke of it in such a way to me, I though<sup>t</sup> he wanted me to make an offer to assist him in it. I do believe if I could be a hatter I might be one.<sup>2</sup> He seems anxious about me. He began blowing up Lord Byron while I was sitting with him, however says he the fellow says true things now & then; at which he took up a Magasine and read me some extracts from Don Juan, (Lord Byron's last flash poem) and particularly one against literary ambition. I do think I must be well spoken of among sets, for Hodgkinson is more than polite, and the coffee-german<sup>3</sup> endeavour'd to be very close to me the other night at covent garden where I went at half-price before I tumbled into bed. Every one however distant an acquaintance behaves in the most conciliating manner to me. You will see I speak of this as a matter of interest. On

<sup>1</sup> Keats wrote *patent* instead of *latent*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 123, p. 313.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps some one in the employ of Abbey, tea and coffee dealer.

the next sheet I will give you a little politics. In every age there has been in England for some two or three centuries subjects of great popular interest on the carpet: so that however great the uproar one can scarcely prophesy any material change in the government, for as loud disturbances have agitated this country many times. All civil<sup>(iz)</sup>ed countries become gradually more enlighten'd and there should be a continual change for the better. Look at this Country at present and remember it when it was even though<sup>(t)</sup> impious to doubt the justice of a trial by Combat. From that time there has been a gradual change. Three great changes have been in progress—First for the better, next for the worse, and a third time for the better once more. The first was the gradual annihilation of the tyranny of the nobles, when Kings found it their interest to conciliate the common people, elevate them and be just to them. Just when baronial Power ceased and before standing armies were so dangerous, Taxes were few, Kings were lifted by the people over the heads of their nobles, and those people held a rod over Kings. The change for the worse in Europe was again this. The obligation of Kings to the Multitude began to be forgotten. Custom had made noblemen the humble servants of Kings. Then Kings turned to the Nobles as the adorners of their power, the slaves of it, and from the people as creatures continually endeavouring to check them. Then in every Kingdom there was a long struggle of Kings to destroy all popular privileges. The english were the only people in europe who made a grand kick at this. They were slaves to Henry 8<sup>th</sup> but were freemen under william 3<sup>rd</sup> at the time the french were abject slaves under Lewis 14<sup>th</sup>. The example of England, and the liberal writers of france and england sowed the seed of opposition to this Tyranny—and it was swelling in the ground till it burst out in the french revolution. That has had an unlucky termination. It put a stop to the rapid progress of free sentiments in England; and gave our Court hopes of turning back to the despotism of the 16 century. They have made a handle of this event in every way to undermine our freedom. They spread a horrid superstition against all in<sup>(n)</sup>ovation and improvement. The present struggle in England of the people is to destroy this superstition. What has rous'd them to do it is their distresses—Perhaps on this account the present dis-

tresses of this nation are a fortunate thing—tho so horrid in their experience. You will see I mean that the french Revolution but (*for* put) a tempor(a)ry stop to this third change, the change for the better. Now it is in progress again and I thing in (*for* think it) an effectual one. This is no contest between whig and tory—but between right and wrong. There is scarcely a grain of party spirit now in England. Right and Wrong considered by each man abstractedly is the fashion. I know very little of these things. I am convinced however that apparently small causes make gréat alterations. There are little signs wher(e)by we many (*for* may) know how matters are going on. This makes the business about Carlisle<sup>1</sup> the Bookseller of great moment in my mind. He has been selling deistical pamphlets, republished Tom Payne<sup>2</sup> and many other works held in superstitious horror. He even has been selling for some time immense numbers of a work call(ed) 'The Deist' which comes out in weekly numbers. For this Conduct he I think has had above a dozen ~~Prosecutions~~ indite-ments issued against him; for which he has found Bail to the amount of many thousand Pounds. After all they are affraid to prosecute: they are affraid of his defence: it ~~will~~ would be published in all the papers all over the Empire: they shudder at this: the Trials would light a flame they could not extinguish. Do you not think this of great import? You will hear by the papers of the proceedings at Manchester and Hunt's triumphal entry into London.<sup>3</sup> I(t) would take me a whole day and a quire of paper to give you any thing like detail. I will merely mention that it is calculated that 30,000 people were in the streets waiting for him—The whole distance from the Angel Islington to the Crown and anchor was lined with Multitudes. As I pass'd Colnaghi's window I saw a profil Portrait of Sands<sup>4</sup> the destroyer of Kotzebue. His very look must interest every one in his favour. I suppose they have represented him in his college dress. He seems to me

<sup>1</sup> See Letter 123, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Paine (1737–1809).

<sup>3</sup> The entry alluded to by Keats was made between the Manchester Massacre and Henry Hunt's trial. The procession started at Islington and proceeded to the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand. 'The Gentleman's Magazine' for September 1819, p. 269, states that the crowds through which Hunt passed and those by whom he was accompanied numbered not less than 200,000.

<sup>4</sup> See Letter 123, p. 320. Keats should have written 'Sand'.

like a young Abelard—A fine Mouth, cheek bones (and this is no joke) full of sentiment; a fine unvulgar nose and plump temples. On looking over some Letters I found the one I wrote intended for you from the foot of Helvellyn to Liverpool—but you had sail'd and therefore It was returned to me. It contained among other nonsense an Acrostic of my Sister's name—and a pretty long name it is. I wrote it in a great hurry which you will see. Indeed I would not copy it if I thought it would ever be seen by any but yourselves—

Give me your patience Sister while I frame  
 Exact in Capitals your golden name:  
 Or sue the fair apollo and he will  
 Rouse from his heavy slumber and instill  
 Great love in me for thee and Poesy.  
 Imagine not that greatest mastery  
 And Kingdom over all the Realms of verse  
 Nears more to Heaven in aught than when we nurse  
 And surety give to love and Brotherhood.

Anthropop(h)agi in Othel(l)o's mood;  
 Ulysses stormed, and his enchanted belt  
 Glow with the Muse, but they are never felt  
 Unbosom'd so and so eternal made,  
 Such tender insence in their Laurel shade,  
 To all the regent sisters of the Nine,  
 As this poor offering to you sister mine.

Kind Sister! aye, this third name says you are;  
 Enchanted has it been the Lord knows where.  
 And may it taste to you like good old wine  
 Take you to real happiness and give  
 Sons daughters and a home like honied hive.

Foot of Helvellyn June 27—

I sent you in my first Packet some of my scotch Letters. I find I have one kept back which was written in the most interesting part of our Tour, and will copy parts of it in the hope you will not find it unamusing. I would give now any thing for Richardson's power of making mountains of mole hills. *Incipit Epistola Caledoniensa*, Dunancullen<sup>1</sup>—I

<sup>1</sup> See Letter 80., p. 196.

did not know the day of the month for I find I have not dated it—Brown must have been asleep. “Just after my last had gone to the post (before I go any further I must premise that I would send the identical Letter inste(a)d of taking the trouble to copy it: I do not do so for it would spoil my notion of the neat manner in which I intend to fold these thin genteel sheets.<sup>1</sup> The original is written on course paper—and the soft ones would ride in the Post-bag very uneasy; perhaps there might be a quarrel—) Just after my last had gone to the post, in came one of the Men with whom we endeavoured to agree about going to Staffa: He said what a pity it was we should turn aside and not see the curiosities. So we had a little talk and finally agreed that he should be our guide across the isle of Mull. We set out, cross’d two ferries, one to the isle of Kerrara of a short distance; the other from Kerrara to Mull 9 miles across. We did it in forty minutes with a fine breeze. The road, or rather the track through the Island is the most dreary you can think of; between dreary mountains; over bog and rock and river with our trowsers<sup>2</sup> tuck’d up and our stockings in hand. About eight o’Clock we arrived at a Shepherds Hut, into which we could scarcely get for the smoke through a door lower than my shoulders. We found our way into a little compartment, with the rafters and turf thatch blackened with Smoke—the earth floor full of hills and dales. We had some white bread with us, made a good supper and slept in our Clothes in some Blankets: our guide snored on another little bed about an arms length off. This next morning we have come about six<sup>3</sup> Miles to breakfast by rather a better path, and are now, by comparison, in a Mansion. Our Guide is a very obligind fellow. In our way this morning he sang us two gaelic songs—one made by a M<sup>rs</sup> Brown on her husbands being drown’d; the other a jacobin one on Charles Stuart. For some days brown has been enquiring out his genealogy here. He thinks his Grandfather came from long island. He got a parcel of People at a Cottage door about him last evening: chatted with one<sup>4</sup> who had been a miss brown and who I think by the family likeness must have

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 94, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Breeches’ to Tom Keats, ‘trowsers’ to Georgiana!

<sup>3</sup> ‘Sax’ to Tom, but the joke has worn off.

<sup>4</sup> ‘ane’ to Tom.

been a Relation. He talk'd<sup>1</sup> with the old woman pretty briskly, flattered a young one, kiss'd a child who was afraid of his Spectacles 'Scar'd at the silver rim and "oval glass"<sup>2</sup>—, and finally drank a pint of Milk. They handled his spectacles as we do a sensitive leaf. July 26. (1818) We had a most wretched walk across the island of Mull and then we cross'd to Iona, or Icolmkil: from Icolmkil we took a boat at a Bargain to take us to Staffa, and after land us at the head of Loch Nakgal (na Keal), whence we should only have to walk half the distance to Oban again and by a better road. All this is well pass'd and done with this singular piece of Luck, that there took place an intermission in the bad Weather just as we came in sight of Staffa, on which it is impossible to land but in a tolerably calm sea. But I will first mention Icolmkil. I know not whether you have heard much about this island; I never did before I was close to it. It is rich in the most interesting Antiquities. Who would expect to find the ruins of a fine Cathedral church; of Cloisters Colleges—Monasteries and nunneries in so remote an island? The beginning of these things was in the sixth Century under the Chaperonage<sup>3</sup> of a<sup>4</sup> Bishop-saint who landed from Ireland choosing this spot for its beauty; for at that time the now treeless place was covered with magnificent woods. His name was St. Columba—Now this saint Columba became the Dominic of the barbarian Christians of the North, and was fam'd also far South; but more especially was revered by the Scots, the Picts, the Norwegians and the Irish. In a course of years the island became to be considered the most holy ground of the North, and the ancient Kings of the forementioned nations chose it for their burial Place. We were show(n) a spot in the churchyard where they say 61 Kings are buried. 48 Scotch from Fergus 2<sup>nd</sup> to Mackbeth, 8 irish, 2<sup>5</sup> Norwegian, and 1 french. They lie in rows compact. Then we were shown other matters of later date but still very ancient. Many tombs of Highland Chieftains, there effigies in complete armour face upwards—b(l)ack marble half covered with

<sup>1</sup> 'jawed' to Tom.

<sup>2</sup> The quotation, the source of which I have failed to trace, was not in the letter to Tom. Perhaps Keats had in mind 'Scared by the fife, and rumbling drum's alarms'; Wordsworth, 'Descriptive Sketches', l. 752.

<sup>3</sup> 'superstition' to Tom.

<sup>4</sup> 'would-be' to Tom.

<sup>5</sup> '4' in Letter 80, and required to make up the 61.

moss. There is in the ruins of the Church a Bishop on his monument as you see them in our cathedrals—as fine as any one I remember<sup>1</sup>—Abbots and Bishops of the islands always from one of the chief clans. There were plenty of Macleans and Macdonnells, among these latter the famous Macdonnell Lord of the Isles. There have been 300 crosses in the island: the Presbyterians destroyed all but two, one of which is a very fine one and entirely covered with a very deep coarse moss. The old Schoolmaster<sup>2</sup> an ignorant little man, but reckoned very clever, showed us these things. He is a Maclean and is as much above 4 foot as he is under 4 foot, three—He stops at one glass of Wiskey unless you press a second, and at the second unless you press a third. I am puzzled how to give you an Idea of Staffa. It can only be represented by a first rate drawing. One may compare the Surface of the island to a roof—the roof is supported by grand pillars of Basalt standing together as thick as honey combs. The finest thing is Fingal's cave: it is entirely a breaking away of basalt pillars. Suppose now the Giants, who came down to the daughters of Men,<sup>3</sup> had taken a whole mass of these Columns and bound them together like Bunches of Matches; and then with immense axes had made a Cavern in the body of these Columns. Such is Fingal's cave except that the Sea has done this work of excavation and is continually dashing there. So that we walk along the sides of the Cave on the heads of the shortest pillars which are left as for convenient stairs. The roof is arch'd somewhat gothic wise, and the length of some of the entire pillars is 50 feet. About the island you might scat an army of men one man on the extremity of each pillar snapped off at different heights. The length of the Cave is 120 feet, and from its extremity the View of the Sea through the large Arch at the Entrance is very grand.<sup>4</sup> The colour of the columns is a sort of black with a lurking gloom of purple therein. For solemnity and grandeur it far surpasses the finest Cathedral. As we approached in the Boat there was such a fine swell of the sea that the columns seem'd rising immediat(e)ly out of the waves—it is impossible to

<sup>1</sup> This monument is not mentioned in the letter to Tom.

<sup>2</sup> See note, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis vi. 2-4. In Letter 80 Keats wrote 'Giants who rebelled against Jove', suggesting 'Hyperion'.

<sup>4</sup> The last three words of this sentence do not appear in Letter 80.



describe it (I find I must keep memorandums of the verses I send you for I do not remember whether I have sent the following lines upon Staffa). I hope not 't would be a horrid balk to you, especially after reading this dull specimen of description. For myself I hate descriptions. I would not send if *(for it)* were it not mine.

*Incipit Poema Lyrica de Staffa tractans.*

Not Aladin magian  
 Ever such a work began;  
 Not the wizard of the Dee  
 Ever such a dream could see;  
 Not st<sup>r</sup> John in Patmos isle,  
 In the Passion of his toil  
 Gaz'd on such a rugged wonder!  
 As I stood its roofing under  
 Lo! I saw one sleeping there  
 On the marble cold and bare,  
 While the surges washed his feet  
 And his garments white did beat,  
 Drench'd, about the sombre rocks.  
 On his neck his well-grown locks,  
 Lifted ~~high~~ dry above the main  
 Were upon the curl again.

'What is this? And who art thou?'  
 Whisper'd I and touch'd his brow.  
 'What art thou and what is this?'  
 Whisper'd I and strove to kiss  
 The spirit's hand to wake his eyes.  
 Up he started in a thrice.  
 'I am Lycidas' said he  
 'Fam'd in funeral Minstrelsey  
 This was architected thus  
 By the great Oceanus:  
 Here his mighty waters play  
 Hollow organs all the day;  
 Here by turns his Dolphins all  
 Finny Palmers, great and small  
 Come to pay devotion due,—  
 Each a Mouth of pearls must strew.

Many Mortals of these days  
 Dare to pass our sacred ways,  
 Dare to see audaciously  
 This Cathedral of the Sea.  
 I have been the Pontif Priest  
 Where the waters never rest,  
 Where a fledgy sea-bird quire  
 Soars for ever; holy fire  
 Have I hid from mortal Man;  
 Proteus is my Sacristan—<sup>1</sup>

I ought to make a large Q<sup>2</sup> here: but I had better take the opportunity of telling you I have got rid of my haunting sore throat—and conduct myself in a manner not to catch another.

You speak of Lord Byron and me—There is this great difference between us. He describes what he sees—I describe what I imagine. Mine is the hardest task. You see the immense difference. The Edinburgh review are affraid to touch upon my Poem. They do not know what to make of it—they do not like to condemn it and they will not praise it for fear—They are as shy of it as I should be of wearing a Quaker's hat. The fact is they have no real taste—they dare not compromise their Judgements on so puzzling a Question. If on my next Publication they should praise me and so lug in Endymion<sup>3</sup>—I will address <them> in a manner they will not at all relish. The Cowardliness of the Edinburgh is worse than the abuse of the Quarterly. Monday <20 September>—This day is a grand day for winchester—they elect the Mayor. It was indeed high time the place should have some sort of excitement. There was nothing going on—all asleep—Not an old Maids Sedan returning from a card party—and if any old women have got tipsy at christenings they have not exposed themselves in the Street. The first night tho' of our arrival here there was a slight uproar took place at about ten of the clock. We heard distinctly a noise patting down the high street as of a walking cane of the good old

<sup>1</sup> ll. 7-8 and the last thirteen lines in the version sent to Tom, Letter 80, were omitted by Keats here.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. Query, suggesting some doubts as to the riddance of his sore throat.

<sup>3</sup> Actually Jeffrey did write of Endymion and the Lamia volume in the 'Edinburgh Review', August 1820.

dowager breed; and a little minute after we heard a less voice observe 'What a noise the ferril made'—it must be loose." Brown wanted to call the Constables, but I observed 't was only a little breeze and would soon pass over. The side-Streets here are excessively maiden lady like. The door steps always fresh from the flannel. The Knockers have a very staid, ser(i)ous, nay almost awful qui(e)tness about them. I never saw so quiet a collection of Lions and rams heads—The doors (are) most part black with a little brass handle just above the Key hole—so that you may easily shut yourself out of your own house—he! he! There is none of your Lady Bellaston<sup>1</sup> rapping and ringing here—no thundering-Jupiter footmen, no opera-treble-tattoos—but a modest lifting up of the knocker by a set of little wee old fingers that peep through the grey mittens, and a dying fall<sup>2</sup> thereof. The great beauty of Poetry is, that it makes every thing every place interesting—The palatine venice and the abbotine Winchester are equally interesting. Some time since I began a Poem call'd 'The Eve of St Mark quite in the spirit of Town quietude. I think it will give you the Sensation of walking about an old county Town in a coolish evening. I know not yet whether I shall ever finish it—I will give it (as) far as I have gone. *Ut tibi placent!*

Upon a Sabbath day it fell;  
 Thrice holy was the sabbath bell  
 That call'd the folk to evening prayer.  
 The City Streets were clean and fair  
 From wholesome drench of April rains,  
 And on the western window pains  
 The chilly sunset faintly told  
 Of immaturd, green vallies cold,  
 Of the green, thorny, bloomless hedge,  
 Of Rivers new with spring tide sedge,  
 Of Primroses by shelterd rills,  
 And Da(i)sies on the aguish hills.  
 Thrice holy was the sabbath bell:  
 The silent streets were crowded well  
 With staid and pious companies  
 Warm from their fireside oratories,

<sup>1</sup> A profligate character in 'Tom Jones'.

<sup>2</sup> 'Twelfth Night', i. i. 4. .

And moving with demurest air  
 To even song and vesper prayer.  
 Each arched porch and entry low  
 Was fill'd with patient crowd and slow,  
 With whispers hush, and shuffling feet  
 While play'd the organs loud and sweet.

The Bells had ceas'd, the Prayers begun,  
 And Bertha had not yet half done  
 A curious volume, patch'd and torn,  
 That all day long, from earliest morn,  
 Had taken captive her fair eyes,  
 Among its golden broideries:—  
 Perplex'd her with a thousand things—  
 The Stars of heaven, and Angels wings;  
 Martyrs in a fiery blaze;  
 Azure Saints 'mid silver rays;  
 A(a)ron's<sup>1</sup> breastplate, and the seven  
 Candlesticks John saw in heaven;<sup>2</sup>  
 The winged Lion of Saint Mark,  
 And the Covenantal Arck  
 With its many Misteries  
 Cherubim and golden Mice.

Bertha was a Maiden fair,  
 Dwelling in the old Minster square;  
 From her fireside she could see  
 Sidelong its rich antiquity,  
 Far as the Bishop's garden wall,  
 Where Sycamores and elm trees tall  
 Full leav'd the forest had outstript,  
 By no sharp north wind ever nipt,  
 So sheltered by the mighty pile.

Bertha arose, and read awhile  
 With forehead 'gainst the window pane,—  
 Again she tried, and then again,  
 Until the dusk eve left her dark  
 Upon the Legend of St. Mark.

<sup>1</sup> Hitherto 'Moses' in all editions but 'Aron's' in this letter and in the holograph in the Keats Manuscript Book in the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> The two lines omitted near the beginning of the Staffa poem were:

When he saw the churches seven  
 Golden aisled built up in heaven.

Perhaps Keats thought he was overworking these rhymes in connexion with St. John in Patmos.

From pleated lawn-frill fine and thin  
She lifted up her soft warm chin  
With aching neck and swimming eyes,  
All daz'd with saintly imageries.

All was gloom, and silent all,  
Save now and then the still footfall  
Of one returning homewards late  
Past the echoing minster gate.  
The clamourous daws that all the day  
Above tree tops and towers play,  
Pair by Pair had gone to rest,  
Each in their ancient belfry nest  
Where asleep they fall betimes  
To music of the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom  
Abroad and in the homely room;—  
Down she sat, poor cheated soul,  
And struck a swart Lamp from the coal,  
Leaned forward with bright drooping hair  
And slant book full against the glare.  
Her shadow, in uneasy guise,  
Hover'd about, a giant size,  
On ceiling, beam, and old oak chair,  
The Parrot's cage and pannel square,  
And the warm-angled winter screne,  
On which were many monsters seen,  
Call'd, Doves of Siam, Lima Mice,  
And legless birds of Paradise,  
Macaw, and tender Av'davat,  
And silken-furr'd Angora Cat.

Untir'd she read—her shadow still  
Glowerd about as it would fill  
The room with gastly forms and shades—  
As though some ghostly Queen of Spades  
Had come to mock behind her back,  
And dance, and ruffle her garments black.

Untir'd she read the Legend page  
Of holy Mark from youth to age,  
On Land, on Sea, in pagan-chains,  
Rejoicing for his many pains.

Sometimes the learned Eremite  
 With golden star, or daggar bright,  
 Refer'd to pious poesies  
 Written in smallest crow quill size  
 Beneath the text and thus the rhyme  
 Was parcell'd out from time to time:

What follows is an imitation of the Authors in Chaucer's time—'tis more ancient than Chaucer himself and perhaps between him and Gower.

---

— Als writeth he of swevenis  
 Men han beforne they waken in blis,  
 When that hir friendes thinke hem bounde  
 In crimpide shroude farre under grounde:  
 And how a litling childe mote be  
 A Scainte er its natavitie,  
 Gif that the modre (Gode her blesse)  
 Kepen in Solitarinesse,  
 And kissen devoute the holy croce.  
 Of Goddis love and Sathan's force  
 He writithe; and things many moe,  
 Of swiche thinges I may not show,  
 Bot I must tellen verilie  
 Somedele of Saintè Cicilie,  
 And chieflie what he auctoreth  
 Of Saintè Markis life and dethe.

---

I hope you will like this for all its Carelessness. I must take an opportunity here to observe that though I am writing *to* you I am all the while writing *at* your Wife.<sup>1</sup> This explanation will account for my speaking sometimes *hoity-toityishly*. Whereas if you were alone I should sport a little more sober sadness. I am like a squint(i)ng gentleman who saying soft things to one Lady ogles another—or what is as bad in arguing with a person on his left hand appeals with his eyes to one one (for on) the right. His Vision is elastic he bends it to a certain object but having a patent sp(r)ing it flies off. Writing has this disadvan(ta)ge of speaking—one cannot write a wink, or a nod, or a grin, or a purse of the Lips, or a *smile*—*O law!* One can-(not)

<sup>1</sup> See Letter 152, p. 389.

put ones finger to one's nose, or yerke ye in the ribs,<sup>1</sup> or lay hold of your button in writing—but in all the most lively and titterly parts of my Letter you must not fail to imagine me as the epic poets say—now here, now there, now with one foot pointed at the ceiling, now with another—now with my pen on my ear, now with my elbow in my mouth. O my friends you loose the action—and attitude is every thing as Fusili<sup>2</sup> said when he took up his leg like a Musket to shoot a Swallow just darting behind his shoulder. And yet does not the word mum! go for ones finger beside the nose. I hope it does. I have to make use of the word Mum! before I tell you that Severn has got a little Baby—all his own let us hope. He told Brown he had given up painting and had turn'd modeller. I hope sincerely tis not a party concern: that no M<sup>r</sup> ——— or \* \* \* \* is the real *Pinxit* and Severn the poor *Sculpsit* to this work of art. You know he has long studied in the Life-Academy. Haydon—yes your wife will say, 'here is a sum total account of Haydon again I wonder your Brother don't put a monthly bulleteen in the Philadelphia Papers about him<sup>3</sup>—I wont hear—no—skip down to the bottom—aye and there are some more of his verses, skip (lullaby-by) them too" "No, lets go regularly through" "I wont hear a word about Haydon—bless the child, how rioty she is!—there go on there" Now pray go on here for I have a few words to say about Haydon. Before this Chancery threat had cut of(f) every legitimate supp(l)y of Cash from me I had a little at my disposal: Haydon being very much in want I lent him 30£ of it. Now in this se(e)-saw game of Life I got nearest to the ground and this chancery business rivetted me there so that I was sitting in that uneasy position where the seat slants so abominably. I applied to him for payment—he could not—that was no wonder; but goodman Delver,<sup>4</sup> where was the wonder then, why marry, in this, he did not seem to care much about it—and let me go without my money with almost non-chalance when he ought to have sold his drawings to supply me.<sup>5</sup> I shall perhaps still be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Othello', i. ii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Fuseli (1741–1825), but here Keats is merely punning on the painter's name.

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 172, p. 450.

<sup>4</sup> 'Hamlet', v. i. 14.

<sup>5</sup> But contrast the antepenultimate sentence of Letter 102, p. 271, nine months earlier, when Haydon was pressed for money and Keats thought himself in a position to help him.

acquainted with him, but for friendship that is at an end. Brown has been my friend in this he got him to sign a Bond<sup>1</sup> payable at ~~two~~ three Months. Haslam has assisted me with the return of part of the money you lent him. Hunt—‘there,’ says your wife, ‘there’s another of those dull folkes—not a syllable about my friends—well—Hunt—what about Hunt pray—you little thing see how she bites my finger—my! is not this a tooth’. Well, when you have done with the tooth read on. Not a syllable about your friends! Here are some syllables. As far as I could smoke things on the Sunday before last, thus matters stood in Henrietta street. Henry was a greater blade than ever I remember to have seen him. He had on a very nice coat, a becoming waistcoat and buff trowsers. I think his face has lost a little of the spanish-brown, but no flesh. He carv’d some beef exactly to suit my appetite, as if I had been measured for it. As I stood looking out of the window with Charles after dinner, quizzing the Passengers, at which, I am sorry to say he is too apt, I observed that his young, son of a gun’s whiskers had begun to curl and curl—little twists and twists, all down the sides of his face getting properly thickish on the angles of the visage. He certainly will have a notable pair of Whiskers. “How shiny your gown is in front” says Charles “Why, dont you see ’tis an apron says Henry” Whereat I scrutiniz’d and behold your mother had a purple stuff gown on, and over it an apron of the same colour, being the same cloth that was used for the lining—and furthermore to account for the shining it was the first day of wearing. I guess’d as much of the Gown—but that is entre-nous. Charles likes england better than france. They’ve got a fat, smiling, fair Cook as ever you saw—she is a little lame, but that improves her—it makes her go more swimmingly. When I ask’d ‘Is M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie within’ she gave such a large, five-and-thirty-year-old smile, it made me look round upon the fo(u)rth stair—it might have been the fifth—but that’s a puzzle. I shall never be able if I were to set myself a recollecting for a year, to recollect that. I think I remember two or three specks in her teeth but I really cant say exactly. Your mother said something about Miss Keasle—what that was is quite a riddle to me now. Whether she

<sup>1</sup> See Haydon’s letter of the 7th of January 1819, p. 274, and the last sentence of Letter 109, p. 276.



had got fatter or thinner, or broader or longer—straiter, or had taken to the zigzags—Whether she had taken to, or left off, asses Milk—that by the by she ought never to touch—how much better it would be to put her out to nurse with the Wise woman of Brentford.<sup>1</sup> I can say no more on so spare a subject. Miss Millar now is a different morsell if one knew how to divide and subdivide, theme her out into sections and subsections.<sup>2</sup> Say a little on every part of her body as it is divided in common with all her fellow creatures, in Moor's Almanac.<sup>3</sup> But Alas! I have not heard a word about her—no cue to begin upon. There was indeed a buzz about her and her mother's being at old Mr's So and So's *who was like to die*—as the jews say—but I dare say, keeping up their dialect, *she was not like to die*. I must tell you a good thing Reynolds *did*: 'twas the best thing he ever *said*. You know at taking leave of a party at a doorway, sometimes a Man dallies and foolishes and gets awkward, and does not know how to make off to advantage—Good bye—well—good-bye—and yet he does not go—good bye and so on—well—good bless you. You know what I mean. Now Reynolds was in this predicament and got out of it in a very witty way. He was leaving us at Hampstead. He delay'd, and we were joking at him and even said, 'be off'—at which he put the tails of his coat between his legs, and sneak'd off as nigh like a spanial as could be. He went with flying colours: this is very clever. I must, being upon the subject, tell you another good thing of him. He began, for the service it might be of to him in the law, to learn french. He had Lessons at the cheap rate of 2. 6 per fag, and observed to Brown, 'Gad says he, the man sells his Lessons so cheap he must have stolen 'em.' You have heard of Hook<sup>4</sup> the farce writer. Horace Smith said to one who ask'd him if he knew Hook "Oh yes! Hook and I are very intimate." Theres a page of Wit for you, to put John Bunyan's emblems<sup>5</sup> out of countenance.

Tuesday (21 September). You see I keep adding a sheet daily till I send the packet off—which I shall not do for a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'The Merry Wives of Windsor', iv. v. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 153 and note 2, p. 392.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 19 and note 1, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Theodore Edward Hook (1788-1841).

<sup>5</sup> 'Book for Boys and Girls', 1686; in later editions called 'Divine Emblems'.

few days as I am inclined to write a good deal: for there can be nothing so remembrancing and enchaining as a good long letter be it composed of what it may. From the time you left me, our friends say I have altered completely—am not the same person—perhaps in this letter I am for in a letter one takes up one's existence from the time we last met—I dare say you have altered also—every man does—our bodies every seven years are completely fresh-materiald—seven years ago it was not this hand that clench'd itself against Hammond.<sup>1</sup> We are like the relict garments of a Saint; the same and not the same: for the careful Monks patch it and patch it: till there's not a thread of the original garment left, and still they show it for St Anthony's shirt. This is the reason why men who had been bosom friends, on being separated for any number of years, afterwards meet coldly, neither of them knowing why. The fact is they are both altered—Men who live together have a silent moulding, and influencing power over each other. They interassimulate. 'Tis an uneasy thought that in seven years the same hands cannot greet each other again. All this may be obviated by a willful and dramatic exercise of our Minds towards each other. Some think I have lost that poetic ardour and fire 'tis said I once had—the fact is perhaps I have: but instead of that I hope I shall substitute a more thoughtful and quiet power. I am more frequently, now, contented to read and think—but now & then, haunted with ambitious thoughts. Qui(e)ter in my pulse, improved in my digestion; exerting myself against vexing speculations—scarcely content to write the best verses for the fever they leave behind. I want to compose without this fever. I hope I one day shall. You would scarcely imagine I could live alone so comfortably “Kepen in solitarinesse”.<sup>2</sup> I told Anne, the Servant here, the other day, to say I was not at home if any one should call. I am not certain how I should endure loneliness and bad weather together. Now the time is beautiful. I take a walk every day for an hour before dinner and this is generally my walk. I go out at the back gate across one street, into the Cathedral yard, which is always interesting; then I

<sup>1</sup> This phrase taken literally points to an early stage in the rupture that led to his quitting his apprenticeship to Hammond.

<sup>2</sup> These words from ‘The Eve of St. Mark’ seem to have pleased their author specially: he quotes them in his letter to Reynolds of the 21st of September 1819 also, p. 383.

pass under the trees along a paved path, pass the beautiful front of the Cathedral, turn to the left under a stone doorway,—then I am on the other side of the building—which leaving behind me I pass on through two college-like squares seemingly built for the dwelling place of Deans and Prebendaries—garnished with grass and shaded with trees. Then I pass through one of the old city gates and then you are in one College Street through which I pass and at the end thereof crossing some meadows and at last a country alley and gardens I arrive, that is, my worship arrives at the foundation of Saint Cross,<sup>1</sup> which is a very interesting old place, both for its gothic tower and alms-square, and for the appropriation of its rich rents to the relation of the Bishop of Winchester. Then I pass across St. Cross meadow till you come to the most beautifully clear river—now this is only one mile of my walk I will spare you the other two till after supper when they would do you more good. You must avoid going the first mile just after dinner. I could almost advise you to put by all this nonsense until you are lifted out of your difficulties—but when you come to this part feel with confidence what I now feel that though there can be no stop put to troubles we are inheritors of there can be and must be and (*for an*) end to immediate difficulties. Rest in the confidence that I will not omit any exertion to benefit you by some means or other. If I cannot remit you hundreds, I will tens and if not that ones. Let the next year be managed by you as well as possible—the next month I mean for I trust you will soon receive Abbey's remittance. What he can send you will not be a sufficient capital to ensure you any command in America. What he has of mine I nearly have anticipated by debts. So I would advise you not to sink it, but to live upon it in hopes of my being able to encrease it. To this end I will devote whatever I may gain for a few years to come—at which period I must begin to think of a security of my own comforts when quiet will become more pleasant to me than the World.<sup>2</sup> Still I would have you doubt my success. 'Tis at present the cast of a die with me. You say 'these things will be a great torment to

<sup>1</sup> See Letter 146, p. 375. Anthony Trollope (1815–82) wrote about St. Cross and the scandal connected therewith in 'The Warden', 1855.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the beginning of this letter: 'The time may come when age will make me more selfish.'

me.' I shall not suffer them to be so. I shall only exert myself the more—while the seriousness of their nature will prevent me from nursing up imaginary griefs.<sup>1</sup> I have not had the blue devils once since I received your last. I am advised not to publish till it is seen whether the Tragedy will or not succeed. Should it, a few mo(n)ths may see me in the way of acquiring property; should it not it will be a drawback and I shall have to perform a longer literary Pilgrimage. You will perceive that it is quite out of my interest to come to America. What could I do there? How could I employ myself? out of the reach of Libraries. You do not mention the name of the gentleman who assists you. 'Tis an extraordinary thing. How could you do without that assistance? I will not trust myself with brooding over this. The following is an extract from a Letter of Reynolds to me. "I am glad to hear you are getting on so well with your writings. I hope you are not neglecting the revision of your Poems for the press: from which I expect more than you do."

The first thought that struck me on reading your last, was to mo(r)tgage a Poem to Murray: but on more consideration I made up my mind not to do so:<sup>2</sup> my reputation is very low: he would perhaps not have negociated my bill of intellect or given me a very small sum. I should have bound myself down for some time. 'Tis best to meet present misfortunes; not for a momentary good to sacrifice great benefits which one's own untram(m)ell'd and free industry may bring one in the end. In all this do never think of me as in any way unhappy: I shall not be so. I have a great pleasure in thinking of my responsibility to you and shall do myself the greatest luxury if I can succeed in any way so as to be of assistance to you. We shall look back upon these times—even before our eyes are at all dim—I am convinced of it. But be careful of those Americans—I could almost advise you to come whenever you have the sum of 500£ to England—Those Americans will I am affraid still fleece you. If ever you should think of such a thing you must bear in mind the very different state of society here—The immense difficulties of the times—The great sum required per annum to maintain yourself in any decency. In fact the whole is with Providence. I know

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 155, of 23 September, p. 397.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 153, of 22 September, p. 393.

now (*for* not) how to advise you but by advising you to advise with yourself. In your next tell me at large your thoughts about america; what chance there is of succeeding there: for it appears to me you have as yet been somehow deceived. I cannot help thinking M<sup>r</sup> Audubon has deceived you. I shall not like the sight of him. I shall endeavour to avoid seeing him. You see how puzzled I am. I have no meridian to fix you to—being the Slave of what is to happen. I think I may bid you finally remain in good hopes; and not tease yourself with my changes and variations of Mind. If I say nothing decisive in any one particular part of my Letter, you may glean the truth from the whole pretty correctly. You may wonder why I had not put your affairs with Abbey in train on receiving your Letter before last, to which there will reach you a short answer dated from Shanklin.<sup>1</sup> I did write and speak to Abbey but to no purpose. Your last, with the enclosed note has appealed home to him. He will not see the necessity of a thing till he is hit in the mouth. 'Twill be effectual. I am sorry to mix up foolish and serious things together—but in writing so much I am obliged to do so—and I hope sincerely the tenor of your mind will maintain itself better. In the course of a few months I shall be as good an Italian Scholar as I am a french one. I am reading Ariosto<sup>2</sup> at present: not managing more than six or eight stanzas at a time. When I have done this language so as to be able to read it tolerably well—I shall set myself to get complete in latin, and there my learning must stop. I do not think of venturing upon Greek. I would not go even so far if I were not persuaded of the power the knowle(d)ge of any language gives one—the fact is I like to be acquainted with foreign languages. It is besides a nice way of filling up intervals &c Also the reading of Dante in (*for* is) well worth the while. And in latin there is a fund of curious literature of the middle ages. The Works of many great Men—Aretine and Sanazarius and Machievell.<sup>3</sup>—I shall never become attach'd to a foreign idiom so as to put it into my writings. The Paradise lost though so fine in itself is a corruption of our Language—it should be kept as

<sup>1</sup> Not extant so far as I know, but cf. Letter 135.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letters 149 and 166, pp. 381, 439.

<sup>3</sup> Pietro Aretino (1492–1557); Jacopo Sannazaro (1458–1530); Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527).

it is unique—a curiosity—a beautiful and grand Curiosity. The most remarkable Production of the world. A northern dialect accommodating itself to greek and latin inversions and intonations. The purest english I think—or what ought to be the purest—is Chatterton's.<sup>1</sup> The Language had existed long enough to be entirely uncorrupted of Chaucer's gallicisms, and still the old words are used. Chatterton's language is entirely northern. I prefer the native music of it to Milton's cut by feet. I have but lately stood on my guard against Milton. Life to him would be death to me. Miltōnic verse cannot be written but it (<for in>) the vein of art—I wish to devote myself to another sensation—<sup>1</sup>

(Friday, 24 September.) I have been obliged to intermiten your Letter for two days (this being Friday morn) from having had to attend to other correspondence. Brown who was at Bedhampton, went thence to Chichester, and I still directing my letters Bedhampton—there arose a misunderstand<ing> about them. I began to suspect my Letters had been stopped from curiosity. However yesterday Brown had four Letters from me<sup>2</sup> all in a Lump—and the matter is clear'd up—Brown complained very much in his Letter to me of yesterday of the great alteration the Disposition of Dilke has undergone. He thinks of nothing but 'Political Justice'<sup>3</sup> and his Boy. Now the first political duty a Man ought to have a Mind to is the happiness of his friends. I wrote Brown a comment<sup>4</sup> on the subject, wherein I explained what I thought of Dilke's Character. Which resolved itself into this conclusion. That Dilke was a Man who cannot feel he has a personal identity unless he has made up his Mind about every thing. The only means of strengthening one's intellect is to make up ones mind about nothing—to let the mind be a thoroughfare for all thoughts. Not a select party. The genus is not scarce in population. All the stubborn arguers you meet with are of the same brood. They never begin upon a subject they have not preresolved on. They want to hammer their nail into you and if you turn the point,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 151, of this same day, p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> Letters 154 and 155, both dated the 23rd of September, might be two of the four, otherwise none of them is extant so far as I know. Cf. Letter 152, p. 390.

<sup>3</sup> Godwin's 'Political Justice' (1793).

<sup>4</sup> Letter not extant.

still they think you wrong. Dilke will never come at a truth as long as he lives; because he is always trying at it. He is a Godwin-methodist. I must not forget to mention that your mother show'd me the lock of hair—'tis of a very dark colour for so young a creature. When it is two feet in length I shall not stand a barley corn higher. That's not fair—one ought to go on growing as well as others. At the end of this sheet I shall stop for the present—and send it off. You may expect another Letter immediately after it. As I never know the day of the mo(n)th but by chance I put here that this is *the 24<sup>th</sup> September*. I would wish you here to stop your ears, for I have a word or two to say to your Wife. My dear sister. In the first place I must quarrel with you for sending me such a shabby sheet of paper—though that is in some degree made up for by the beautiful impression of the seal. You should like to know what I was doing the first of May<sup>1</sup>—let me see—I cannot recollect. I have all the Examiners ready to send. They will be a great treat to you when they reach you. I shall pack them up when my Business with Abbey<sup>2</sup> has come to a good conclusion and the remittance is on the road to you. I have dealt round your best wishes to our friends like a pack of cards, but being always given to cheat, myself, I have turned up ace.<sup>3</sup> You see I am making game of you. I see you are not at all happy in that America. England however would not be over happy for us if you were here. Perhaps 'twould be better to be teased here than there. I must preach patience to you both. No step hasty or injurious to you must be taken. Your observation on the moschetos gives me great pleasure. 'Tis excessively poetical and humane. You say let one large sheet be all to me. You will find more than that in different parts of this packet for you. Certainly, I have been caught in rains. A Catch in the rain occasioned my last sore throat—but as for red-hair'd girls upon my word I do not recollect ever having seen one. Are you quizzing

<sup>1</sup> Had Letter 123 arrived, Georgiana could have known from the last part (pp. 337-41) that he was seeking a better sonnet form.

<sup>2</sup> Opposite Lord Houghton's version of this passage Dilke notes: 'The business for George mentioned P 19 (see p. 398) and this with Abbey related I have no doubt to a settlement of Tom's property. To settle with Abbey was a difficult thing—and must have been particularly so while George was abroad. John I think got money for himself, as I have before mentioned, though only in part.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 134, p. 352, 'if my Fate does not turn up Pam'.

me or Miss Waldegrave when you talk of promenading. As for Pun-making, I wish it was as good a trade as pin-making. There is very little business of that sort going on now. We struck for wages like the Manchester we(a)vers<sup>1</sup>—but to no purpose—so we are all out of employ. I am more lucky than some you see by having an op(p)ortunity of exporting a few—getting into a little foreign trade—which is a comfortable thing. I wish one could get change for a pun in silver currency. I would give three and a half any night to get into Drury-pit. But they wont ring at all. No more will notes you will say—but notes are differing things—though they make together a Pun-note—as the term goes. If I were your Son I should't mind you, though you rapt me with the Scissors. But lord! I should be out of favor sin the little un be comm'd. You have made an Uncle of me, you have, and I don't know what to make of myself. I suppose next there'll be a Nevey. You say—in may last—write directly. I have not received your Letter above 10 days. The though(t) of you(r) little girl puts me in mind of a thing I heard a M<sup>r</sup> Lamb say. A child in arms was passing by his chair toward the mother, in the nurses arms. Lamb took hold of the long clothes saying “Where, god bless me, where does it leave off?” *Saturday* (25 September). If you would prefer a joke or two to any thing else I have two for you fresh hatchd, just ris as the Baker's wives say by the rolls. The first I play'd off at Brown—the second I play'd *on* on myself. Brown when he left me<sup>2</sup> “Keats” says he “my good fellow (staggering upon his left heel, and fetching an irregular pirouette with his right) Keats says he (depressing his left eyebrow and elevating his right one ((tho by the way, at the moment, I did not know which was the right one)) Keats says he (still in the same posture but furthermore both his hands in his waistcoat pockets and jutting out his stomach) “Keats—my—go-o-ood fell-o-o-o-oo! says he (interlarding his exclamation with certain ventriloquial parentheses)—no this is all a lie—He was as sober as a Judge when a judge happens to be sober; and said “Keat(s), if any Letters come for me—Do not forward them, but open them and give me the marrow of them in few words. At the time when I wrote my first to him no Letters had arrived. I thought I would invent

<sup>1</sup> Manchester cotton-spinners' strike, 1818.

<sup>2</sup> To go 'avisiting' to Chichester: see end of Letter 149, p. 382.



one, and as I had not time to manufacture a long one I dabbed off as *<for a>* short one—and that was the reason of the joke succeeding beyond my expectations. Brown let his house to a M<sup>r</sup> Benjamin a Jew. Now the water which furnishes the house is in a tank sided with a composition of lime and the lime imp<sup>(r)</sup>egnates the water unpleasantly. Taking advantage of this circumstance I pretended that M<sup>r</sup> Benjamin had written the following short note—"Sir. By drinking your damn'd tank water I have got the gravel—what reparation can you make to me and my family? Nathan Benjamin" By a fortunate hit, I hit upon his right he<sup>(a)</sup>then name<sup>1</sup>—his right Pronomen. Brown in consequence it appears wrote to the surprised M<sup>r</sup> Benjamin the following "Sir, I cannot offer you any remuneration until your gravel shall have formed itself into a Stone when I will cut you with Pleasure. C. Brown" This of Browns M<sup>r</sup> Benjamin has answered insisting on an explatinon of this singular circumstance. B. says "when I read your Letter and his following I roared, and in came M<sup>r</sup> Snook who on reading them seem'd likely to burst the hoops of his fat sides—so the Joke has told well. Now for the one I played on myself—I must first give you the Scene and the dramatis Personæ. There are an old Major and his youngish wife live in the next apartments to me. His bed room door opens at an angle with my sitting room door. Yesterday I was reading as demurely as a Parish Clerk when I heard a rap at the door. I got up and opened it—no one was to be seen. I listened and heard some one in the Major's room. Not content with this I went up stairs and down look'd in the cubboards—and watch'd. At last I set myself to read again not quite so demurely—when there came a louder rap. I arose determin'd to find out who it was. I look<sup>(ed)</sup> out the Stair cases were all silent. "This must be the Major's wife said I—at all events I will see the truth" so I rapt me at the Major's door and went in to the utter surprise and confusion of the Lady who was in reality there—after a little explanation, which I can no more describe than fly, I made my retreat from her convinced of my mistake. She is to all appearance a silly body and is really surprised about it. She must have been, for I have discoverd that a little girl in the house was the Rappee—I assure you she has nearly make me Sneeze.<sup>2</sup> If the Lady

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 172, p. 449.

<sup>2</sup> Rappee, a coarse kind of snuff.

tells tits I shall put a very grave and moral face on the matter with the old Gentleman, and make his little Boy a present of a humming top. My Dear George—This Monday morning the 27<sup>th</sup> I have received your last dated July 12<sup>th</sup><sup>1</sup> You say you have not heard from Englan(—<sup>2</sup>) nths—Then my Letter from Shanklin<sup>3</sup> written I think at the en(—<sup>2</sup>) have reach'd you. You shall not have cause to think I neglect you. I have kept this back a little time in expectation of hearing from Mr Abbey—You will say I might have remained in Town to be Abbey's messenger in these affairs. That I offer'd him—but he in his answer convinced me he was anxious to bring the Business to an issue—He observed that by being himself the agent in the whole, people might be more expeditious. You say you have not heard for three mo(n)ths and yet you(r) letters have the tone of knowing how our affairs are situated by which I conjecture I acquainted you with them in a Letter<sup>4</sup> previous to the Shanklin one. That I may not have done. To be certain I will here state that it is in consequence of Mr<sup>s</sup> Jennings threat(e)ning a Chancery suit that you have been kept from the receipt of monies and myself deprived of any help from Abbey. I am glad you say you keep up your Spirits—I hope you make a true statement on that score. Still keep them up—for we are all young. I can only repeat here that you shall hear from me again immediately. Notwithstanding their bad intelligence I have experienced some pleasure in receiving so correctly two Letters from you, as it give(s) me if I may so say a distant Idea of Proximity. This last improves upon my litt(l)e niece. Kiss her for me. Do not fret yourself about the delay of money on account of any immediate opportunity

<sup>1</sup> This would seem to be a slip of Keats's, unless by 'last' he means 'last to arrive', because at the beginning of this letter he mentions one from George dated the 24th of July, previously received. Probably the later letter was sent from the Settlement by speedier means than the earlier one.

<sup>2</sup> The signature to this letter is neatly cut away, probably for an autograph collector, and with it the words written on the back belonging to these spaces. The missing words supplied by Speed in his 1883 edition of the letters are 'for three months' and 'end of June, has not'; but as they would not fill the empty spaces in the holograph and the second phrase does not fit in with the passage following, they are unacceptable, though they no doubt convey the sense of what Keats wrote.

<sup>3</sup> Not extant; cf. reference and note, p. 424.

<sup>4</sup> Not extant. Keats first heard of the Chancery suit on 15 June 1819, see Letters 132 and 133. Letter 123 was finished on 3 May, and there is none to George between Letter 123 and this, 156.

being lost: for in a new country whoever has money must have opportunity of employing it in many ways. The report runs now more in favor of Kean stopping in England. If he should I have confident hopes of our Tragedy—If he smokes the hotblooded character of Ludolph—and he is the only actor that can do it—He will add to his own fame, and improve my fortune. I will give you a half dozen lines of it before I part as a specimen—

“Not as a Swordsman would I pardon crave,  
But as a Son: the bronz’d Centurion  
Long-toil’d in forreign wars, and whose high deeds  
Are shaded in a forest of tall spears,<sup>1</sup>  
Known only to his troop, hath greater plea  
Of favour with my Sire than I can have—”<sup>2</sup>

Believe me my dear brother and Sister—

Your affectionate and anxious Brother

⟨Signature cut out.⟩<sup>3</sup>

157. To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE. Friday  
1 Oct. 1819.

Address: Charles W. Dilke Esq<sup>re</sup> | Navy Pay Office | Somerset  
House, redirected to 3 Great Smith Street | Westminster

Postmark: WINCHESTER 1 OCT 1819

Winchester Friday Oct<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>st</sup>

My dear Dilke,

For sundry reasons, which I will explain to you when I come to Town, I have to request you will do me a great favor as I must call it knowing how great a Bore it is. That your imagination may not have time to take too great an alarm I state immediat(e)ly that I want you to hire me a \*couple of rooms in Westminster. Quietness and ch(e)apness are the essentials: but as I shall with Brown be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ‘Paradise Lost’, i. 547: ‘A forest huge of spears’.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Otho the Great’, i. iii. 24–9.

<sup>3</sup> Possibly that given by George to Lewis J. Cist of Cincinnati on June 18, 1837. See ‘Keats’ Reputation in America to 1848’, by H. E. Rollins, Cambridge, Mass., 1846, p. 46.

157. Lord Houghton, referring here to Keats and Brown, says—‘The friends returned to town together, and Keats took possession of his new abode. But he had miscalculated his own powers of endurance: the enforced absence from his friends was too much for him, and a still stronger impulse drew him back again to Hampstead.’

returned by next Friday you cannot in that space have sufficient time to make any choice selection, and need not be very particular as I can when on the spot suit myself at leisure. Brown bids me remind you not to send the Examiners after the third. Tell M<sup>rs</sup> D. I am obliged to her for the late ones which I see are directed in her hand. Excuse this mere business letter for I assure you I have not a syllable at hand on any subject in the world.

Your sincere friend

John Keats—

\* A Sitting Room and bed room for myself alone.

158. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. *Sunday 3 Oct. 1819.*

*Address:* B. R. Haydon Esq<sup>re</sup> | Lisson Grove North | Paddington

*Postmark:* WINCHESTER 3 OC 1819

Winchester Sunday Morn.

My dear Haydon,

Certainly I might: but, a few Months pass away before we are aware; I have a great aversion to letter writing, which grows more and more upon me; and a greater to summon up circumstances before me of an unpleasant nature—I was not willing to trouble you with them. Could I have dated from my Palace in Milan you would have heard from me—Not even now will I mention a word of my affairs—only that “I Rab am here”<sup>1</sup> but shall not be here more than a Week more, as I purpose to settle in Town and work my way with the rest. I hope I shall never be so silly as to injure my health and industry for the future by speaking, writing or fretting about my non-estate. I have no quarrel, I assure you, of so weighty a nature, with the world, on my own account as I have on yours. I have done nothing—except for the amusement of a few people who refine upon their feelings till any thing in the ununderstandable way will go down with them—

158. It will be observed that, while Keats's attitude towards the genius of Haydon shows no change in this letter, there is, when we compare it with former letters, a certain reserve of tone, quite corresponding with the altered personal attitude referred to in the letter to George Keats (pp. 418–19). —H.B.F.

<sup>1</sup> Burns, ‘Second Epistle to John Lapnaik’, l. 60.

people predisposed for sentiment. I have no cause to complain because I am certain any thing really fine will in these days be felt. I have no doubt that if I had written *Othello* I should have been cheered by as good a Mob as Hunt.<sup>1</sup> So would you be now if the operation of painting was as universal as that of writing—It is not: and therefore it did behove men I could mention among whom I must place Sir G. Beaumont<sup>2</sup> to have lifted you up above sordid cares—That this has not been done is a disgrace to the country. I know very little of Painting, yet your pictures follow me into the Country—when I am tired with reading I often think them over and as often condemn the spirit of modern Connoisseurs. Upon the whole indeed you have no complaint to make, being able to say what so few Men can “I have succeeded”: On sitting down to write a few lines to you these are the uppermost in my mind, and however I may be beating about under the arctic while your spirit has passed the line, you may lay too a minute and consider I am earnest as far as I can see. Though at this present “I have great dispositions to write”<sup>3</sup> I feel every day more and more content to read. Books are becoming more interesting and valuable to me. I may say I could not live without them. If in the course of a fortnight you can procure me a ticket to the british museum<sup>4</sup> I will make a better use of it than I did in the first instance. I shall go on with patience in the confidence that if I ever do any thing worth rememb(e)ring the Reviewers will no more be able to stumble-block me than the Academy could you. They have the same quarrel with you that the Scotch nobles had with Wallace—The fame they have lost through you is no joke to them. Had it not been for you Fuseli would have been not as he is major but maximus domo. What the Reviewers can put a hindrance to must be—a nothing—or mediocre which is worse. I am sorry to say that since I saw you I have been guilty of—a practical Joke upon Brown which has had all the success of an innocent Wild fire among people.<sup>5</sup> Some day in the next week you shall hear it from me by word of Mouth—I have not

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the mob which cheered Henry Hunt as he entered London: see p. 407, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Howland Beaumont (1753–1827): see p. 433, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ‘Merry Wives of Windsor’, III. i. 22.

<sup>4</sup> The Museum authorities have no record of issue of the ticket.

<sup>5</sup> The Nathan Benjamin joke: see Letter 156, p. 428.

seen the portentous Book which was skummer'd<sup>1</sup> at you just as I left town. It may be light enough to serve you as a Cork Jacket and save you for awhile the trouble of swimming. I heard the Man went raking and rummaging about like any Richardson. That and the *Memoirs of Menage*<sup>2</sup> are the first I shall be at. From S<sup>r</sup> G. B's Lord Ms<sup>3</sup> and particularly S<sup>r</sup> John Leicesters good lord deliver us—I shall expect to see your Picture plumped out like a ripe Peach—you would not be very willing to give me a slice of it. I came to ~~this~~ place in the hopes of meeting with a Library but was disappointed. The High Street is as quiet as a Lamb; the knockers are dieted to three raps per diem. The walks about are interesting—from the many Buildings and arch ways—The view of the high street through the Gate of the City, in the beautiful September evening light has amused me frequently. The bad singing of the Cathedral I do not care to smoke—being by myself I am not very coy in my taste. At S<sup>t</sup>. Cross there is an interesting Picture of Albert Dürers<sup>4</sup>—who living in such warlike

<sup>1</sup> The middle of this word has been torn away with the seal of the letter; but I have no doubt it was the expressive provincialism restored in the text, used in much the same sense as in the lines from John Davies's 'Commendatory Verses'—

And for a monument to after-commers  
Their picture shall continue (though Time scummers  
Upon th' Effigie . . .).

The late Frank Scott Haydon identified the book for me—'A Desultory Exposition of an Anti-British System of Incendiary Publication', &c. (London, 1819). The author, William Paulet Carey (1759–1839), art-critic and picture dealer, appears to have criticized Haydon's *Dentatus* in 'The Champion'. The book was described by Frank Haydon as 'an answer to certain statements in the "Annals of the Fine Arts"', containing 'a very fair, though bitter, criticism of the tone of that remarkable periodical, and of the misstatements in it a thorough exposure'.—H.B.F. The word 'not' in the preceding line has also disappeared since this note was written.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly Tom Keats had brought from Paris '*Ménagiana ou les bons mots et remarques critiques, historiques, morales & d'érudition, de Monsieur Ménage*', Paris, 1729, in 4 vols. duodecimo, or a copy of one of the three earlier editions.

<sup>3</sup> Sir George Beaumont and Sir Henry Phipps, first Earl of Mulgrave (1755–1831). Perhaps Haydon had been recalling the rejection of the picture of *Macbeth* commissioned by Sir George Beaumont some ten years before—an affair concerning which he declared thirty-one years after its occurrence that he was 'still suffering from its fatal effects'. Mr. Blunden attributes the trouble to Sir George's having told Haydon he regretted his answering his opponents instead of painting on undisturbed. Lord Mulgrave did not support Haydon's idea of getting a grant of public money for art; and Sir John Fleming Leicester, first Lord de Tabley (1762–1827), another of Haydon's patrons, engaged William Carey (see note 1 above) to publish a catalogue of his pictures.

<sup>4</sup> The painting is no longer in the Hospital of St. Cross.

times perhaps was forced to paint in his Gauntlets—so we must make all allowances—

I am my dear Haydon  
Yours ever  
John Keats

Brown has a few words to say to you and will cross this

My dear Sir,

I heard yesterday you had written to me at Hampstead. I have not rec<sup>d</sup>. your letter. You must, I think, accuse me of neglect, but indeed I do not merit it. This many worded Keats has left me no room to say more.—I shall be in Town in a few days.—

Your's truly  
Cha<sup>s</sup>. Brown.

159. To FANNY BRAWNE. *Monday 11 Oct. 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead.

*Postmark:* 11 OC 1819

College Street.

My sweet Girl,

I am living to day in yesterday: I was in a complete fa(s)cination all day. I feel myself at your mercy. Write me ever so few lines and tell you (<for me>) you will never for ever be less kind to me than yesterday—. You dazzled me. There is nothing in the world so bright and delicate. When Brown came out with that seemingly true story again(s)t me last night, I felt it would be death to me if you had ever believed it—though against any one else I could muster up my obstinacy. Before I knew Brown could disprove it I was for the moment miserable. When shall we pass a day alone? I have had a thousand kisses, for which with my whole soul I thank love—but if you should deny me the thousand and first—'twould put me to the proof how great a misery I could live through. If you should

159. It would seem to have been at No. 25 College Street that Dilke obtained for Keats the rooms which the poet asked him to find in Letter 157. How long Keats remained in those rooms I have been unable to determine, to a day; but in Letter 161, headed 'Wentworth Place', and postmarked the 16th of October 1819 (p. 436), he speaks of having 'returned to Hampstead', after lodging 'two or three days . . . in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Dilke'. In Letter 162 he writes from Great Smith Street (the address of the Dilkes) of his *purpose* to live at Hampstead. I suppose the 'three days dream' there referred to was a visit to Mrs. Brawne's house, from which he proceeded to Mrs. Dilke's—there to come to a final resolution of living at Hampstead.

1819

Letter 160

ever carry your threat yesterday into execution—believe me 'tis not my pride, my vanity or any petty passion would torment me—really 'twould hurt my heart—I could not bear it. I have seen M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke this morning; she says she will come with me any fine day.

Ah hertè mine!

Ever yours  
John Keats

160. To FANNY BRAWNE. *Wednesday 13 Oct. 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead—

*Postmarks:* COLLEGE ST and 13 OC 1819

25 College Street.

My dearest Girl,

This moment I have set myself to copy some verses out fair. I cannot proceed with any degree of content. I must write you a line or two and see if that will assist in dismissing you from my Mind for ever so short a time. Upon my Soul I can think of nothing else. The time is passed when I had power to advise and warn you against the unpromising morning of my Life. My love has made me selfish. I cannot exist without you. I am forgetful of every thing but seeing you again—my Life seems to stop there—I see no further. You have absorb'd me. I have a sensation at the present moment as though I was dissolving—I should be exquisitely miserable without the hope of soon seeing you. I should be affraid to separate myself far from you. My sweet Fanny, will your heart never change? My love, will it? I have no limit now to my love—You(r) note came in just here—I cannot be happier away from you. 'Tis richer than an Argosy of Pearles. Do not threat me even in jest. I have been astonished that Men could die Martyrs for religion—I have shudder'd at it. I shudder no more—I could be martyr'd for my Religion—Love is my religion—I could die for that. I could die for you. My Creed is Love and you are its only tenet. You have ravish'd me away by a Power I cannot resist; and yet I could resist till I saw you; and even since I have seen you I have endeavoured often 'to reason against the reasons of my Love'.<sup>1</sup> I can do that no more—the pain would be too great. My love is selfish. I cannot breathe without you.

Yours for ever  
John Keats.

<sup>1</sup> Ford's "'Tis Pity she's a Whore', i. iii.



161. To FANNY KEATS. *Saturday 16 Oct. 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbeys Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 16 OC 1819

Wentworth Place

My dear Fanny,

My Conscience is always reproaching me for neglecting you for so long a time. I have been returned from Winchester this fortnight and as yet I have not seen you. I have no excuse to offer. I should have no excuse. I shall expect to see you the next time I call on M<sup>r</sup> A about Georges affairs which perplex me a great deal—I should have to day gone to see if you were in Town, but as I am in an industrious humour (which is so necessary to my livelihood for the future) I am loath to break through it though it be merely for one day, for when I am inclined I can do a great deal in a day—I am more fond of pleasure than study (many men have prefer'd the latter) but I have become resolved to know something which you will credit when I tell you I have left off animal food that my brains may never henceforth be in a greater mist than is theirs by nature—I took Lodgings in Westminster for the purpose of being in the reach of Books, but am now returned to Hampstead being induced to it by the habit I have acquired of this room I am now in and also from the pleasure of being free from paying any petty attentions to a diminutive house-keeping. M<sup>r</sup> Brown has been my great friend for some time—without him I should have been in, perhaps, personal distress—as I know you love me though I do not deserve it, I am sure you will take pleasure in being a friend to M<sup>r</sup> Brown even before you know him. My Lodgings for two or three days were close in the neighbourhood of M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke who never sees me but she enquires after you—I have had letters from George lately which do not contain, as I think I told you in my last,<sup>1</sup> the best news. I have hopes for the best—I trust in a good termination to his affairs which you please god will soon hear of—It is better you should not be teased with the particulars. The whole amount of the ill news is that his mercantile speculations have not had success in consequence of the general

<sup>1</sup> i.e. No. 146, p. 374, but he did not mention the contents. It was in No. 153, p. 392, to Dilke that he used, as here, a negative phrase: 'not the most comfortable intelligence'.

1819

Letter 163

depression of trade in the whole province of Kentucky and indeed all america. I have a couple of shells for you you will call pretty.

Your affectionate Brother  
John—

162. To FANNY BRAWNE. Tuesday 19 Oct. 1819.

Address: Miss Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead

Postmarks: COLLEGE ST and 19 OCT 1819

Great Smith Street  
Tuesday Morn

My sweet Fanny,

On awakening from my three days dream ("I cry to dream again")<sup>1</sup> I find one and another astonish'd at my idleness and thoughtlessness. I was miserable last night—the morning is always restorative. I must be busy, or try to be so. I have several things to speak to you of tomorrow morning. Mr<sup>s</sup> Dilke I should think will tell you that I purpose living at Hampstead. I must impose chains upon myself. I shall be able to do nothing. I sho(u)ld like to cast the die for Love or death. I have no Patience with any thing else—if you ever intend to be cruel to me as you say in jest now but perhaps may sometimes be in earnest be so now—and I will—my mind is in a tremble, I cannot tell what I am writing.

Ever my love yours  
John Keats

163. To JOSEPH SEVERN. Wednesday (Oct?) 1819.

Address: Joseph Seve(r)n Esq<sup>re</sup> | 6 Goswell Street Road | Opposite Spencer Street.

Postmark: HAMPSTEAD. No date.

Wentworth Place  
Wednesday

Dear Severn,

Either your Joke about staying at home is a very old one or I really call'd. I dont remember doing so. I am

<sup>1</sup> 'The Tempest', III. ii. 152-5.

163. The letter is inscribed '1819' in Severn's handwriting; it probably belongs to the end of October. The picture was that of 'The Cave of Despair': see Letters 167 and 168, pp. 442, 444. I am inclined to think that more notes than appear here passed between Keats and Severn before the poet visited the Academy.

glad to hear you have finish'd the Picture and am more anxious to see it than I have time to spare: for I have been so very lax, unemployed, unmeridian'd, and objectless these two months that I even grudge indulging (and that is no great indulgence considering the Lecture is not over till 9 and the lecture room seven miles from wentworth Place) myself by going to Hazlitt's Lecture.<sup>1</sup> If you have hours to the amount of a brace of dozens to throw away you may sleep nine of them here in your little Crib and chat the rest—When your Picture is up and in a good light I shall make a point of meeting you at the Academy if you will let me know when. If you should be at the Lecture tomorrow evening I shall see you—and congratulate you heartily—Haslam I know "is very Beadle to an amorous sigh"<sup>2</sup>

Your sincere friend  
John Keats.

164. Fragment to WILLIAM HASLAM. *Tuesday 2 Nov. (1819).*

*Address and postmark not recorded.*

Wentworth Place  
November 2

My disposition is of so careless a nature that it is continually tormenting me for my neglect of matters of consequence. If you can command £30 you will cure me of a disease which at intervals comes upon me like a fever fit.

165. To FANNY KEATS. *Wednesday 17 Nov. 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Pancras Lane | Queen Street Cheapside

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 17 NO 1819

Wednesday Morn

My dear Fanny,

I received your Letter yesterday Evening and will obey

<sup>1</sup> Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth, at the Surrey Institution, Blackfriars Road.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Love's Labour's Lost', III. i. 185.

164. This letter was sold in the Charles W. Frederickson sale in New York in May 1897, and again in the John H. V. Arnold sale, New York, April 1904. I have reason to believe that in 1881 it was in the hands of an English dealer who described it as '1½ pages 8vo. address and seal': in the New York catalogues it figures as '2 pages 8vo'. The extract above was contributed to 'Notes and Queries', April 14, 1934, p. 257, by Mr. John Howard Birss.

it tomorrow. I would come to day but I have been to Town so frequently on Georges Business it makes me wish to employ to day at Hampstead. So I say Thursday without fail. I have no news at all entertaining and if I had I should not have time to tell them as I wish to send this by the morning Post.

Your affectionate Brother  
John—

166. To JOHN TAYLOR. *Wednesday 17 Nov. 1819.*

*Address:* John Taylor Esq<sup>re</sup> | Taylor and Hessey's | Fleet Street

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 17 NO 1819

Wentworth Place Wednesday,

My dear Taylor,

I have come to a determination not to publish any thing I have now ready written; but for all that to publish a Poem before long and that I hope to make a fine one. As the marvellous is the most enticing and the surest guarantee of harmonious numbers<sup>1</sup> I have been endeavouring to persuade myself to untether Fancy and let her manage for herself. I and myself cannot agree about this at all. Wonders are no wonders to me. I am more at home amongst Men and women. I would rather read Chaucer than Ariosto.<sup>2</sup> The little dramatic skill I may as yet have however badly it might show in a Drama would I think be sufficient for a Poem. I wish to diffuse the colouring of St Agnes eve throughout a Poem in which Character and Sentiment would be the figures to such drapery. Two or three such Poems, if God should spare me, written in the course of the next six years, would be a famous gradus ad Parnassum altissimum. I mean they would nerve me up to the writing of a few fine Plays—my greatest ambition—when I do feel ambitious. I am sorry to say that is very seldom. The subject we have once or twice talked of appears a promising one, the Earl of Leicester's history. I am this morning reading Holingshed's<sup>3</sup> Elisabeth. You had some Books awhile ago, you promised to lend me, illustrative of my Subject. If you can lay hold of them or any others which may be serviceable to me I know you

<sup>1</sup> 'Paradise Lost', iii. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letters 149 and 156, pp. 381, 424.

<sup>3</sup> Raphael Holinshed (d. 1580?), 'Chronicles of England', published in 1577.

will encourage my low-spirited Muse by sending them—or rather by letting me know when our Errand cart Man shall call with my little Box. I will endeavour to set my self selfishly at work on this Poem that is to be.

Your sincere friend  
John Keats—

167. To GEORGE KEATS. *Friday* (19) *November 1819.*

*Address:* Mr George Keats | Louisville | Kentucky

*No postmark.*

Friday Evening  
Nov<sup>r</sup>.

My dear George,

You must think my delay very great. I assure you it is no fault of mine. Not expecting you would want money so soon I did not send for the necessary power of attorney from Holl<sup>1</sup> and before I received you(r) Letter which reached me in the middle of the summer at Shanklin.<sup>2</sup> I wrote for it then immediately and received it about ten days ago. You will also be much disappointed at the smallness of the Sum remitted to Warder's: there are two reasons for it, first that the Stock<sup>s</sup> are so very low, and secondly that Mr. Abbey is unwilling to venture more till this business of Mr<sup>s</sup>. Jennings's is completely at rest. Mr. Abbey promised me to day that he would do all in his power to forward it expressing his wish that by the time it was settled she would make no claim the Stocks might recover themselves so that your property should not be sold out at so horrible a disadvantage. I know not what comfort to give you under these circumstances. Our affairs are in an awkward state. You have done as much as a man can do: I am not as yet fortunate. I should, in duty, endeavour to

167. This letter bears four endorsements not in Keats's handwriting. The earliest reads: 'Forwarded by the William via New York. 22d Novem<sup>r</sup> 19 John Capper', which suggests that Keats was writing on Friday the 19th of November and that the letter was sent through Capper and Hazlewood. The second inscription is: 'Lat. 40. 23 N. Long. 72 W. 16<sup>th</sup> February 1820 Dane W. Threlkeld'; and the third: 'Edgartown M<sup>r</sup> Feb. 23 Ship 27'. The latest discloses something of the wanderings of the letter before it reached the Library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania: 'Given me by Mrs. Philip Speed the eldest daughter of Mr. George Keats to whom this letter was addressed by his Brother John—Louisville Ky—February 1869—Frank M. Citing'.

<sup>1</sup> Holl for Holt, see Letter 123 and note 3, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 135, p. 353.

write you a Letter with a comfortable nonchalance, but how can I do so when you are in so perplexing a situation, and I not able to help you out of it. The distance between us is so great, the Posts so uncertain. We must hope. I am aff(r)aid you are no more than myself form'd for a gainer of money. I have been daily expecting to hear from you again. Does the Steam boat make any return yet?

Whether I shall at all be set afloat upon the world depends now upon the success of the Tragedy I spoke of.<sup>1</sup> We have heard nothing from Elliston who is now the Renter of Drury Lane since the piece was sent in which was three weeks and more ago. The reason may be that Kean has not return'd, whose opinion Elliston will partly rely on. Brown is still very sanguine. The moment I have any certain intelligence concerning it I will let you know. I have not been to see Fanny since my return from Winchester.<sup>2</sup> I have written and received a Letter from her. Mr Abbey says she is getting stouter. I call'd in Rodney Street about a fortnight since. Your Mother was quite well and Charles was to set out again for Paris on the day following. I do not call so often as I should do if I had any good news to tell—I am there in the character of a Prevaricator. I must not tell the truth. Mr. Abbey shows at times a little anxiety about me he wanted me the other day to turn Bookseller. Why does he not make some such proposal to you? Yet he can not care much for I till yesterday had had no money of him for ten months and he never enquired how I liv'd; nor how I had paid my last Christmas Bills (still unpaid) though I repeatedly mentioned them to him. We are not the only toilers and sufferers in the World. Hunt was arrested the other day. He soon however dated from his own house again. Hazlitt has begun another course of Lectures, on the Writers of Elizabeth's reign—I hear he quoted me in his last Lecture<sup>3</sup>—Our Set still continue <to> separate as we get older, each follows with more precision the bent of his own Mind. Brown and I by living together are an exception. Rice continues to every

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 156, p. 399. Robert William Elliston (1774-1831), actor, and lessee and manager of Drury Lane, 1819-26.

<sup>2</sup> If, as I surmise, this letter was written on the 19th, Keats apparently did not carry out his intention of visiting his sister on the previous day; see Letter 165, p. 439.

<sup>3</sup> In the introductory remarks to his Lectures on 'The Age of Elizabeth', Hazlitt misquoted l. 237 of 'Sleep and Poetry'.

one his friendly behaviour: his illness and his wit stick by him as usual. In a note to me the other day he sent the following Pun—*Tune—the Harlot's Lament*

Between the two P—x's I've lost every Lover,  
 But a difference I found 'twixt the great and the small:  
 For by the Small Pox I gott {pitted } all over  
 By the other I did not get {pittied } at all.

Reynolds has settled in Lodgings very near to Rice's and seems set in for the Law. Dilke I call(ed) upon at his office the other day. We ta(l)ked about you; you being mostly my subject with him. He says you should have kept to your original design; in which I differ with him entirely. I think you have done perfectly right. I have this moment received a Letter from Severn, whom I have not seen for some time, he tell(s) me he has finish'd a picture of Spenser's Cave of despair which is designed to contend for the Prize at the Academy and is now hung up there for Judgement.<sup>1</sup> He wishes me to see it. I have been endeavouring to write lately, but with little success as I require a little encouragement, as little better fortune to befall you and happier news from you before I can write with an untrammell'd mind. Nothing could have in all its circumstances fallen out worse for me than the last year has done, or could be more damping to my poetical talent—I comfort myself in the idea that you are a consolation to each other. Haslam told me the last time I saw him that he was about to write to you. He is entirely taken up with his Sweet-heart—I feel very loath to write more than this Sheet—you must excuse the shortness of this Letter for<sup>2</sup> the length of the last and the length of the next I hope, if any thing occurs to enspirit (me a) little. Fanny would like a Letter from you. I should (think) that Abbey from the delay of Waltons<sup>3</sup> house has employed (anothe)r Lawyer on our Business. Mr<sup>s</sup>. Jennings has not instituted (an)y action against us yet, nor has she withdrawn her claim I think I told you that even if she were to lose her cause we sho(u)ld have to pay the expences of the Suit. You urg'd me to get Mr. Abbey to advance you money—that he will by no means do—for besides the risk of the law (small

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letters 163 and 168 to Severn and notes, pp. 437, 443.

<sup>2</sup> Keats wrote 'by' first and then 'for' over it.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 156, p. 398.

enough indeed) he will never be persu(a)ded but you will loose it in America. For a bit of a treat in the heart of all this I had a most abusive Letter from Fry<sup>1</sup>—committing you and myself to destruction without reprieve—In your next Letter make some questions regularly upon which you wish to be in(form)ed concerning our's and any other subject and I will answer (them as) amply as I can. My dear Sister God bless you and your (baby gir)l. The enquir(i)es about you are very frequent—My dear George I remain, in hopes,

Your most affectionate Brother  
John Keats

168. To JOSEPH SEVERN. *Monday* (6 Dec.?) 1819.

*Address and postmark, see note.*

Wentworth Place  
Monday Morn—

My dear Severn,

I am very sorry that on Tuesday I have an appointment in the City of an undeferable nature; and Brown on the same day has some business at Guildhall. I have not been able to figure your manner of executing the Cave of despair, therefore it will be at any rate a novelty and surprise to me—I trust on the right side. I shall call upon you

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 156, p. 398.

168. This letter is given from a manuscript without date, address, or postmark; but I think there can be no doubt the proposed visit to the Academy was for the purpose of seeing Severn's 'Cave of Despair' 'hung up for the prize'. If so, probably the Monday on which the letter was written was the 6th of December 1819; for among Severn's Keats relics was an outside leaf of a letter bearing a Hampstead postmark of that date, addressed by Keats to 'Joseph Severn Esq<sup>r</sup>, 6 Goswell Street Road, Near Northampton Square,' and probably belonging to this very letter. The pictures for the 'Cave of Despair' competition were to be in the Academy by the 1st of November 1819; and some one from the 'Literary Gazette' had seen them by the 10th of December, the day on which the premiums were to be distributed. The critic professes not to know the decision, but gives his voice in favour of 'a M<sup>r</sup> Severn, who has produced a very clever and unexaggerated picture'. When the picture appeared at the Academy exhibition of the next year, there was the following note on it in 'Annals of the Fine Arts': 'This picture, it appears, obtained the medal last year; and we are sorry that of all their students such as this should be the best. Their regulations drive the able from their schools, and humble mediocrity is all that is left them.' In the Academy catalogue for 1820 the title of the picture (Number 398) is 'Una and the Red Cross Knight in the Cave'; and an extract is given from 'The Faerie Queen', 1. ix. 48-52—the passage in which Una seizes the dagger from the Red Cross Knight and prevents his using it against himself.—H.B.F.

The reference to the Prize Poem and its Rivals is of course a joke.



some morning shortly early enough to catch you before you can get out—when we will proceed to the Academy. I think you must be suited with a good painting light in your Bay window. I wish you to return the Compliment by going with me to see a Poem I have hung up for the Prize in the Lecture Room of the surry Institution. I have many Rivals the most threatning are An Ode to Lord Castlereagh, and a news series of Hymns for the New, new Jerusalem Chapel—You had best put me into your Cave of despair—

Ever yours sincerely  
John Keats

169. To JAMES RICE. (December 1819.)

Address: James Rice Jun<sup>r</sup> Esq<sup>re</sup> | Poland Street | Oxford  
(Street)

No postmark.

Wentworth Place

My dear Rice,

As I want the coat on my back mended, I would be obliged if you will send me the one Brown left at your house, by the Bearer—During your late contest I hea⟨r⟩d regular reports of you; how that your time was entirely taken up, and you⟨r⟩ health improving—I shall call in the course of a few days and see whether your promotion has made any difference in your Behaviour to us. I suppose Reynolds has given you an account of Brown and Elliston. As he has not rejected our Tragedy I shall not venture to call him directly a fool; but as he wishes to put it off till next season I cant help thinking him little better than a Knave<sup>1</sup>—That it will not be acted this Season is yet uncertain—Perhaps we may give it another furbish and try it at covent Garden. 'Twould do one's heart good to see Macready in Ludolph. If you do not see me soon it will be from the humour of writing, which I have had for three days, continuing. I must say to the Muses what the maid says to the Man—"take me while the fit is on me."<sup>2</sup> Would you like a true Story "There was a Man and his Wife who being to go a long journey on foot, in the course of their travels came to a River which rolled knee deep over the pebbles—In these cases the Man generally pulls off his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Much Ado about Nothing', iv. ii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Wit without Money', v. iv.

shoes and stockings and carries the woman over on his Back. This Man did so; and his Wife being pregnant and troubled, as in such cases is very common, with strange longings, took the strangest that ever was heard of. Seeing her Husband's foot, a handsome on(e) enough, look very clean and tempting in the clear water, on their arrival at the other bank she earnestly demanded a bit of it; he being an affectionate fellow and fearing for the comeliness of his child gave her a bit which he cut off with his Clasp Knife—Not satisfied she asked another morsel—supposing there might be twins he gave her a slice more. Not yet contented she craved another Piece. "You Wretch cries the Man, would you wish me to kill myself? take that!" Upon which he stabb'd her with the knife, cut her open and found three Children in her Belly two of them very comfortable with their mouth's shut, the third with its eyes and mouth stark staring open. "Who would have thought it" cried the Widower, and pursued his journey—, Brown has a little rumbling in his Stomach this morning—

Ever yours sincerely  
John Keats—

170. To FANNY KEATS. *Monday 20 Dec. 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 20 DE 1819

Wentworth Place  
Monday Morn—

My dear Fanny,

When I saw you last, you ask'd me whether you should see me again before Christmas. You would have seen me if I had been quite well. I have not, though not unwell enough to have prevented me—not indeed at all—but fearful le(s)t the weather should affect my throat which on exertion or cold continually threatens me. By the advice of my Doctor I have had a wa(r)m great Coat made and have ordered some thick shoes—so furnish'd I shall be with you if it holds a little fine before Christmas day. I have been very busy since I saw you especially the last Week and shall be for some time, in preparing some Poems to come out in the Spring and also in h(e)ightingening the interest of our Tragedy. Of the Tragedy I can give you but news semigood. It is accepted at Drury Lane with a promise of

coming out next season: as that will be too long a delay we have determined to get Elliston to bring it out this Season or to transfer it to Covent Garden. This Elliston will not like, as we have every motive to believe that Kean has perceived how suitable the principal Character will be for him. My hopes of success in the literary world are now better than ever. Mr Abbey, on my calling on him lately, appeared anxious that I should apply myself to something else—He mentioned Tea Brokerage. I supposed he might perhaps mean to give me the Brokerage of his concern, which might be executed with little trouble and a good profit; and therefore said I should have no objection to it especially as at the same time it occur(r)ed to me that I might make over the business to George—I questioned him about it a few days after. His mind takes odd turns. When I became a Suitor he became coy. He did not seem so much inclined to serve me. He described what I should have to do in the progress of business. It will not suit me. I have given it up. I have not heard again from George which rather disappoints me, as I wish to hear before I make any fresh remittance of his property. I received a note from Mrs Dilke a few days ago inviting me to dine with her on Xmas day, which I shall do. Mr Brown and I go on in our old dog trot of Breakfast, dinner (not tea for we have left that off) supper Sleep, Confab, stirring the fire and reading. Whilst I was in the Country last Summer Mrs Bentley tells me a woman in mour(n)ing call'd on me, —and talk'd something of an aunt of ours—I am so careless a fellow I did not enquire, but will particularly. On Tuesday I am going to hear some Schoolboys Speechify on breaking up day—I'll lay you a pocket pi(e)ce<sup>1</sup> we shall have "My name is norval"<sup>2</sup> I have not yet look'd for the Letter you mention'd as it is mix'd up in a box full of papers—you must tell me, if you can recollect, the subject of it. This moment Bentley brought a Letter from George for me to deliver to Mrs Wylie—I shall see her and it before I see you. The direction was in his best hand, written with a good Pen and sealed with a Tassi(e)'s Shakespeare<sup>3</sup> such as I gave you—We judge of people's hearts by their Countenances; may we not judge of Letters in

<sup>1</sup> A piece of money kept in the pocket as a charm.

<sup>2</sup> 'Douglas', a tragedy by John Home (1724-1808).

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 116 and note, p. 286.

the same way? if so, the Letter does not contain unpleasant news—Good or bad spirits have an effect on the handwriting. This direction is at least unnervous and healthy. Our Sister is also well, or George would have made strange work with Ks and Ws. The little Baby is well or he would have formed precious vowels and Consonants—He sent off the Letter in a hurry, or the mail bag was rather a wa(r)m birth, or he has worn out his Seal, for the Shakespeare's head is flattened a little. This is close muggy weather as they say at the Ale houses—

I am, ever, my dear Sister

Yours affectionately

John Keats—

171. To FANNY KEATS. *Wednesday 22 December 1819.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | Rd. Abbey<sup>s</sup> Esq<sup>re</sup> | Pancras Lane | Queen Street Chea(p)side.

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 7 o'clock DE 22 1819

Wentworth Place,  
Wednesday—

My dear Fanny,

I wrote to you a Letter directed Walthamstow the day before yesterday wherein I promised to see you before Christmas day. I am sorry to say I have been and continue rather unwell, and therefore shall not be able to promise certainly. I have not seen M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie's Letter. Excuse my dear Fanny this very shabby note.

Your affectionate Brother

John.

172. To GEORGIANA AUGUSTA KEATS. *Thursday 13—Friday 28 Jan. 1820.*

*No address or postmark.*

Thursday Jan<sup>y</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> 1820—

My dear Sister,

By the time you receive this your troubles will be over—I wish you knew they were half over; I mean that George

172. This brilliant letter written to Keats's brilliant sister-in-law in America is now given from the holograph: the first eight pages are in the collection of Mrs. Miriam Lutchter Stark in the Library of the University of Texas, and the last two pages, beginning 'Friday 27<sup>th</sup>', in that of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach of New York. There are still missing from the

is safe in England, and in good health—To write to you by him is almost like following ones own Letter in the Mail that it may not be quite so I will leave common intelligence out of the question and write wide of him as I can. I fear I must be dull having had no goodnatured flip from fortune's finger<sup>1</sup> since I saw you and so *(for no)* side way comfort in the success of my friends. I could almost promise that if I had the means I would accompany George back to America and pay you a Visit of a few Months. I should not think much of the time or my absence from my Books, or I have no right to think, for I am very idle: but then I ought to be diligent and at least keep myself within the reach of materials for diligence. Diligence! that I do not mean to say, I should say dreaming over my Books, or rather other peoples Books. George has promised to bring you to England when the five years have elapsed, I regret very much that I shall not be able to see you before that time; and even then then I must hope that your affairs will be in so prosperous a way as to induce you to stop longer. Yours is a hardish fate to be so divided from your friends and settled among a people you hate. You will find it improve. You have a heart that will take hold of your Children. Even Georges absence will make things better—his return will banish what must be your greatest sorrow and at the same time minor ones with it. Robinson Crusoe when he saw himself in danger of perishing on the Waters look'd back to his island as to the haven of his Happiness and on gaining it once more was more content with his Solitude. We smoke George about his little Girl, he runs the common beaten road of every father, as I dare say you do of every Mother—there is no Child like his Child—so original! original forsooth However I take you at your words; I have a lively faith that yours is the very gem of all Children. Aint I its Unkle?

On Henry's Marriage there was a piece of Bride cake sent me—it miss'd its way—I suppose the Carrier or

final section six or seven lines, and I fancy that they must have been torn off before the document came into the hands of the collector who contributed that section to 'The Philobiblion' (New York, August 1862), as the incomplete sentence following the words 'aware of' is not given there. The 'Philobiblion' version is sufficiently accurate to justify the adoption of the few words that have now disappeared from the holograph.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Hamlet', iii. ii. 7.

Coachman was a Conjurer and wanted it for his own private use. Last Sunday George and I dined at Millars—there were your Mother and Charles with Fool Lacon Esq<sup>re</sup> who sent the sly disinterested Shawl to Miss Millar with his own heathen name<sup>1</sup> engraved in the Middle. Charles had a silk Handkerchief belonging to a Miss Grover with whom he pretended to be smitten and for her sake kept exhibiting and adoring the Handkerchief all the evening. Fool Lacon Esq<sup>re</sup> treated it with a little venturesome trembling Contumely, whereon Charles set him quietly down on the floor—from where he as quietly got up. This process was repeated at supper time, when your Mother said “If I were you M<sup>r</sup> Lacon I would not let him do so.” Fool Lacon Esq<sup>re</sup> did not offer any remark. He will undoubtedly die in his bed. Your Mother did not look quite so well on Sunday. M<sup>rs</sup> Henry Wylie is excessively quiet before people; I hope she is always so. Yesterday we dined at Taylor’s in Fleet Street. George left early after dinner to go to Deptford. He will make all square there for me. I could not go with him. I did not like the amusement. Haslam is a very good fellow indeed; he has been excessively anxious and kind to us. But is this fair? He has an innamorata at Deptford and he has been wanting me for some time past to see her. This is a thing which it is impossible not to shirk. A Man is like a Magnet, he must have a repelling end—so how am I to see Haslam’s lady and family if I even went, for by the time I got to greenwich I should have repell’d them to Blackheath and by the time I got to Deptford, they would be on Shooters hill, when I came to shooters Hill, they would alight at Chatham and so on till I drove them into the Sea, which I think might be inditeable. The Evening before yesterday we had a piano forte hop at Dilkes. There was very little amusement in the room but a Scotchman to hate.<sup>2</sup> Some people you must have observed have a most unpleasant effect upon you when you see them speaking in profile—this Scotchman is the most accomplish’d fellow in this way I ever met with. The effect was complete—It went down like a dose of bitters and I hope will improve my digestion.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 156, p. 428. Probably Anthony Lacon, wine cooper, of 14 Drury Lane. See also reference on p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> Dilke writes: ‘This I think must have been a M<sup>r</sup> Webster who resided at Hampstead as a teacher and gave Wentworth lessons.’

At Taylor's too there was a Scotchman<sup>1</sup>—not quite so bad for he was as clean as he could get himself. Not having succeeded at Drury Lane with our Tragedy, we have been making some alterations and are about to try Covent Garden. Brown has just done patching up the Copy, as it is altered. The only reliance I had on it was in Kean's acting. I am *not* affraid it will be damn'd in the Garden. You said in one of your Letters that there was nothing but Haydon and Co in mine.<sup>2</sup> There can be nothing of him in this for I never see him or Co—George has introduced to us an American of the Name of Hart—I like him in a Moderate way. He was at M<sup>rs</sup> Dilkes party; and sitting by me, we began talking about english and american ladies—The Miss Reynolds and some of their friends made not a very enticing row opposite us. I bade him mark them and form his Judgement of them—I told him I hated Englishmen because they were the only Men I knew. He does not understand this. Who would be Bragadocio to Johnny Bull? Johnny's house is his Castle, and a precious dull Castle it is. What a many Bull Castles there are in So and So Crescent. I never wish myself an unversd visitor an(d) news monger but when I write to you. I should like for a day or two to have somebody's knowledge, M<sup>r</sup> Lacon's for instance of all the different folks of a wide acquaintance to tell you about. Only let me have his knowledge of family minutiae and I would set them in a proper light but bless me I never go any where—my pen is no more gar(r)ulous than my tongue—Any third person would think I was addressing myself to a Lover of Scandal. But we know we do not love scandal but fun, and if Scandal happens to be fun that is no fault of ours. There were very pretty pickings for me in Georges Letters about the Prairie Settlement, if I had had any taste to turn them to account in England. I knew a friend of Miss Andrews, yet I never mention'd her to him: for after I had read the letter I really did not recollect her Story. Now I have been sitting here a half hour with my invention at work to say something about your Mother or Charles or Henry but it is in vain. I know not what to say. Three nights since George went with your Mother to the play. I hope she will soon see mine acted. I do not remember ever to have thank'd you for your

<sup>1</sup> This might have been Allan Cunningham, or perhaps the Thornton mentioned later in this letter.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 156, p. 418.

tassels<sup>1</sup> to my Shakspeare—there he hangs so ably supported opposite me. I thank you now. It is a continual memento of you. If you should have a Boy do not christen him John, and persuade George not to let his partiality for me come across. 'Tis a bad name, and goes against a Man. If my name had been Edmund I should have been more fortunate. I was surprised to hear of the State of Society at Louisville, is *(for it)* seems you are just as ridiculous there as we are here—threepenny parties, half penny Dances—the best thing I have heard of is your shooting, for it seems you follow the Gun. Give my Compliments to M<sup>rs</sup> Audubon and tell her I cannot think her either good looking or honest—Tell M<sup>r</sup> Audubon he's a fool—and Briggs that 'tis well I was not M<sup>r</sup> A—

*Saturday Jan<sup>y</sup> 15.* It is strange that George having to stop so short a time in England I should not have seen him for nearly two days. He has been to Haslam's and does not encourage me to follow his example—He had given promise to dine with the same party tomorrow, but has sent an excuse which I am glad of as we shall have a pleasant party with us tomorrow. We expect Charles here today—This is a beautiful day: I hope you will not quarrel with it if I call it an american one. The Sun comes upon the Snow and makes a prettier candy than we have on twelvth-cakes. George is busy this morning in making copies of my verses. He is making now one of an Ode to the nightingale, which is like reading an account of the b(l)ack hole at Calcutta on an ice bergh. You will say this is a matter of course, I am glad it is. I mean that I should like your Brothers more, the more I know them. I should spend much more time with them if our lives were more run in paral(l)el, but we can talk but on one subject that is you. The more I know of Men the more I know how to value entire liberality in any of them. Thank God there are a great many who will sacrifice their worldly interest for a friend: I wish there were more who would sacrifice their passions. The worst of Men are those whose self interests are their passion—the next those whose passions are their self-interest. Upon the whole I dislike Mankind: whatever people on the other side of the question may advance they cannot deny that they are always surprised at hearing of a good action and never of a bad one. I am glad you have

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 123 and note 1, p. 299.



something <to> like in America, Doves. Gertrude of Wyoming<sup>1</sup> and Birkbeck's book<sup>2</sup> should be bound up together like a Brace of Decoy Ducks. One is almost as poetical as the other. Precious miserable people at the Prairie. I have been sitting in the Sun whilst I wrote this till it became quite oppressive, this is very odd for January. The vulcan fire is the true natural heat for Winter: the Sun has nothing to do in winter but to give "a little glooming light much like a Shade"<sup>3</sup>—Our irish Servant<sup>4</sup> has piqued me this morning by saying that her Father in Ireland was very much like my Shakspeare<sup>5</sup> only he had more color than the Engraving. You will find on Georges return that I have not been neglecting your affairs. The delay was unfortunate, not faulty;—perhaps by this time you have received my three last letters<sup>6</sup> not one of which had reach'd before George sail'd, I would give two pence to have been over the world as much as he has—I wish I had money enough to do nothing but travel about for years—Were you now in England I dare say you would be able (setting aside the pleasure you would have in seeing your mother) to suck out more amusement for Society than I am able to do. To me it is all as dull here as Louisville could be. I am tired of the Theatres. Almost all the parties I may chance to fall into I know by heart. I know the different Styles of talk in different places: what subjects will be started how it will proceed, like an acted play, from the first to the last, Act—If I go to Hunt's I run my head into many-times heard puns and music. To Haydon's worn out discourses of poetry and painting: the Miss Reynolds I am affraid to speak to for fear of some sickly reiteration of Phrase or Sentiment. When they were at the dance the other night I tried manfully to sit near and talk to them, but to not <for no> purpose, and if I had 't would have

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Campbell's 'Gertrude of Wyoming', published 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Morris Birkbeck's 'Notes on a Journey in America, from the Coast of Virginia to the Territory of Illinois', reviewed in the same number of 'The Quarterly Review' as 'Endymion' (No. 37, published in September 1818).

<sup>3</sup> Spenser, 'Faerie Queene', i. i. 14. 5. Keats put the double quotes above the m in 'glooming' instead of before 'a'.

<sup>4</sup> Abigail Donaghue, see p. 529 note.

<sup>5</sup> Probably this refers to the portrait given to him by his landlady at Carisbrook in 1817, and hung with tassels to it, already mentioned on pp. 18, 29. But it may possibly be the portrait in the folio of 1808—a book which Keats possessed—a print copied from that by Martin Droeshout in the folio of 1623.

<sup>6</sup> Letters 123, 156, and 167.

been to no purpose still. My question or observation must have been an old one, and the rejoinder very antique indeed. At Dilkes I fall foul of Politics. 'Tis best to remain aloof from people and like their good parts without being eternally troubled with the dull processes of their every day Lives. When once a person has smok'd the vapidness of the routine of Society he must have either self interest or the love of some sort of distinction to keep him in good humour with it. All I can say is that standing at Charing cross and looking east west north and South I can see nothing but dullness. I hope while I am young to live retired in the Country, when I grow in years and have a right to be idle I shall enjoy cities more. If the American Ladies are worse than the English they must be very bad. You say you should like your Emily brought up here. You had better bring her up yourself. You know a good number of english Ladies what encomium could you give of half a dozen of them—the greater part seem to me downright American. I have known more than one M<sup>rs</sup> Audubon their affectation of fashion and politeness cannot transcend ours. Look at our Cheapside Trade(s)mans sons and daughters—only fit to be taken off by a plague. I hope now soon to come to the time when I shall never be forc'd to walk through the City and hate as I walk.

*Monday Jan<sup>y</sup> 17.* George had a quick rejoinder to his Letter of excuse to Haslam so we had not his company yesterday which I was sorry for as there was our old set. I know three witty people all distinct in their excellence—Rice, Reynolds and Richards.<sup>1</sup> Rice is the wisest, Reynolds the playfullest, Richards the out o' the wayest. The first makes you laugh and think, the second makes you laught and not think, the third puzzles your head—I admire the first, I enjoy the second, I stare at the third. The first is Claret, the second Ginger beer, the third Crème de Bzrapqmdrag.<sup>2</sup> The first is inspired by Minerva, the second by Mercury, the third by Harlequin Epigram Esq<sup>re</sup>—The first is neat in his dress, the second slovenly, the third uncomfortable—The first speaks adagio, the second al(1)egretto, the third both together. The first is swiftean, the second Tom cribean,<sup>3</sup> the third Shandean—

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Richards. See Biographical Memoranda.

<sup>2</sup> Probably coined by Keats for the occasion.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Moore's 'Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress, with a Preface, Notes, and an Appendix, by one of the Fancy' (1819).

and yet these three Eans are not three Eans but one Ean. Charles came on Saturday, but went early: he seems to have Schemes and plans and wants to get off. He is quite right, I am glad to see him employed at his years. You remember I wrote you a Story about a woman named Alice<sup>1</sup> being made young again—or some such stuff—In your next Letter tell me whether I gave it as my own or whether I gave it as a matter Brown was employed upon at the time. He read it over to George the other day, and George said he had heard it all before. So Brown suspects I have been giving You his Story as my own—I should like to set him right in it by your Evidence. George has not return'd from Town when he does I shall tax his memory. We had a young, long, raw, lean Scotchman with us yesterday call'd Thornton. Rice for fun or for mistake would persist in calling him Stevenson. I know three people of no wit at all, each distinct in his excellence. A, B, and C. A is the soolishest, B the sulkiest, C is a negative—A makes you yawn, B makes you hate, as for C you never see him though he is six feet high. I bear the first, I forbear the second I am not certain that the third is. The first is gruel, the second Ditch water, the third is spilt—he ought to be wip'd up A is inspired by Jack o' the Clock—B, has been drill'd by a russian Sargeant, C—they say is not his Mothers true Child but that she bought him of the Man who cries 'Young Lambs to sell.' Twang dillo dee.. This you must know is the Amen to nonsense. I know many places where Amen should be scratched out, rubb'd over with po(u)nce made of Momus's little finger bones, and in its place 'Twang-dillo-dee' written. This is the word I shall henceforth be tempted to write at the end of most modern Poems. Every American Book ought to have it. It would be a good distinction in Society. My Lords Wellington, Castlereagh and Canning and many more would do well to wear Twangdillo-dee written on their Backs instead of wearing ribbands in their Button holes. How many people would go sideways along walls and quickset hedges to keep their Twang dillo dee out of sight, or wear large pigtails to hide it. However there would be so many that the Twang dillo dees would keep one another in Countenance—which Brown cannot do for

<sup>1</sup> Presumably the name of the old woman referred to in the passage about a story of Brown's: see Letter 123, pp., 297-8, 302.

me. I have fallen away lately. Thieves and Murderers would gain rank in the world—for would any one of them have the poorness of spirit to condescend to be a Twang dillo dee—"I have robb'd in many a dwelling house, I have kill'd many a fowl many a goose and many a Man," (would such a gentleman say) but thank heaven I was never yet a Twang dillo dee." Some philosophers in the Moon who spy at our Globe as we do at theirs say that Twang dillo dee is written in large Letters on our Globe of Earth—They say the beginning of the T is just on the spot where London stands. London being built within the Flourish—*w a n* reach downward and slant as far a(s) Timbuctoo in africa, the tail of the G. goes slap across the Atlantic into the Rio della Plata—the remainder of the Letters wrap round new holland and the last e terminates on land we have not yet discoverd. However I must be silent, these are dangerous times to libel a man in, much more a world.

*Friday 27<sup>th</sup>.*<sup>1</sup> I wish you would call me names. I deserve them so much. I have only written two sheets for you, to carry by George and those I forgot to bring to town and have therefore to forward them to Liverpool. George went this morning at 6 o Clock by the Liverpool Coach—His being on his journey to you, prevents me regreeting his short stay. I have no news of any sort to tell you. Henry is wifebound in Cambden Town, there is no getting him out. I am sorry he has not a prettier wife: indeed 'tis a shame: she is not half a wife. I think I could find some of her relations in Buffon, or Capt<sup>n</sup> Cook's voyages, or the *hieroglyphics* in Moors almanack,<sup>2</sup> or upon a chinese Clock door, the Shepherdesses on her own mantlepiece, or in a *cruel* sampler in which she may find herself worsted, or in a dutch toy shop window, or one of the Daughters in the Ark, or in any picture shop window.<sup>3</sup> As I intend to retire into the Country where there will be no sort of news, I shall not be able to write you very long Letters—Besides I am affraid the Postage comes to too much; which till

<sup>1</sup> Keats should have written 'Friday 28th'. George wrote to his sister on Sunday, January the 30th, that he had arrived in Liverpool 'last night after a rather disagreeable ride of 36 hours'. Therefore he must have left London on the 28th, which was a Friday.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter 19 and note, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> It would seem from this description that Mr. Henry Wylie was constant to his preference for the young lady described by Keats nearly a year before. See Letter 123, p. 310.

now I have not been aware of. We had a fine Packing up at *<torn>* other things I saw *<torn>*. People in military Bands are generally seriously occupied—none may or can laugh at their work but the Kettle Drum—Long drum D° Triangle, and Cymbals—Thinking you might want a Rat-catcher I put your mother's old quaker-colour'd Cat into the top of your bonnet—she's wi' kitten, so you may expect to find a whole family—I hope the family will not grow too large for its Lodging. I shall send you a close written Sheet on the first of next Month but for fear of missing the Liverpool Post I must finish here. God bless you and your little Girl.

Your affectionate Brother  
John Keats—

From GEORGE KEATS to JOHN KEATS. Sunday 30 January 1820.

Address: Mr John Keats | Wentworth Place | Hampstead | near London

Postmarks: LIVERPOOL 30 JA 1820 and 1 FE 1820

Liverpool—Sunday. Jany. 30<sup>th</sup> 1819<sup>1</sup>

My dear John

I arrived last night after a cold ride and took a passage by the Courier before I went to bed, she will sail on Tuesday. I awoke at about two this morning and found myself nearly afloat in my bed, the cock of Cistern on the floor above was accidentally left running and the water had dripped thro' the ceiling, I got up, called for lights and found it had found its way thro feather bed, and mattress and made a great pool on the ground. At first I was alarmed having taken Calomel, but I am quite well this morning. This stride towards home has releived *<sic>* me considerably and the ship that is to carry me another portion of my journey came upon my sight with agreeable sensations notwithstanding my sufferings at Sea. Occupation will drive away the mumps untill I get on board, and I hope favorable gales will keep them away when on board; when arrived at New York and the remainder of my journey occupation and the near approach to George and our darling, the mumps will be to me antipodes. Tell Haslam of my arrival here and promise him a letter from Phil<sup>a</sup>, shake hands with Dilke & Spouse, Reynolds & Rice and say why I did'nt call. If unfavorable wind should detain me over Tuesday I'll write again. Rem<sup>s</sup> to your neighbours and Brown. goodbye

My dear John,

Your very affectionate Friend and Brother  
George.

<sup>1</sup> George's error. He had left London in the Liverpool coach on Friday 28 January 1820 at 6 a.m., see Letter 172 and note, p. 455.

1820

Letter 174

173. To FANNY BRAWNE. (Friday 4 Feb. 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne.

No postmark.

Dearest Fanny, I shall send this the moment you return. They say I must remain confined to this room for some time. The consciousness that you love me will make a pleasant prison of the house next to yours. You must come and see me frequently: this evening, without fail—when you must not mind about my speaking in a low tone for I am ordered to do so though I *can* speak out.

Yours ever

sweetest love.—

J. Keats.

turn over

Perhaps your Mother is not at home and so you must wait till she comes. You must see me to-night and let me ~~have~~ hear you promise to come to-morrow.

Brown told me you were all out. I have been looking for the stage the whole afternoon. Had I known this I could not have remain'd so silent all day.

174. To FANNY KEATS. Sunday 6 Feb. 1820.

Address: Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup>. Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Pancras Lane Queen  
Street | Cheapside

Postmark: HAMPSTEAD 7 FE 1820.

Wentworth Place  
Sunday Morning.

My dear Sister,

I should not have sent those Letters without some notice if M<sup>r</sup> Brown had not persuaded me against it on account of an illness with which I was attack'd on Thursday. After that I was resolved not to write till I should be on the mending hand: thank God, I am now so. From imprudently leaving off my great coat in the thaw I caught cold

173. This and later letters to Fanny Brawne up to No. 206 seem to have been written at Brown's house in Wentworth Place and taken next door by hand. This one was probably written the day after Keats was taken ill.

174. Thursday the 3rd of February 1820 was the date upon which Keats was taken ill; and by Sunday the 6th he was writing this letter to his sister.

which flew to my Lungs. Every remedy that has been applied has taken the desired effect, and I have nothing now to do but stay within doors for some time. If I should be confined long I shall write to M<sup>r</sup> Abbey to ask permission for you to visit me. George has been running great chance of a similar attack, but I hope the Sea air will be his Physician in case of illness—the air out at sea is always more temperate than on land. George mentiond, in his Letters to us, something of M<sup>r</sup> Abbey's regret concer(n)ing the silence kept up in his house. It is entirely the fault of his Manner. You must be careful always to wear warm cloathing not only in frost but in a Thaw—I have no news to tell you. The half built houses opposite us stand just as they were and seem dying of old age before they are brought up. The grass looks very dingy, the Celery is all gone, and there is nothing to enliven one but a few Cabbage Sta(ck)s that seem fix'd on the superan(n)uated List. M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke has been ill but is better. Several of my friends have been to see me. M<sup>rs</sup> Reynolds was here this morning and the two M<sup>r</sup> Wylies. Brown has been very alert about me, though a little wheezy himself this weather. Every body is ill. Yesterday evening M<sup>r</sup> Davenport,<sup>1</sup> a gentleman of hampstead sent me an invitation to supper, instead of his coming to see us, having so bad a cold he could not stir out—so you (see) tis the weather and I am among a thousand. Whenever you have an inflam(m)atory fever never mind about eating. The day on which I was getting ill I felt this fever to a great height, and therefore almost entirely abstained from food the whole day. I have no doubt experienc'd a benefit from so doing—The Papers I see are full of anecdotes of the late King:<sup>2</sup> how he nodded to a Coal heaver and laugh'd with a Quaker and lik'd boil'd Leg of Mutton. Old Peter Pindar is just dead: what will the old King and he say to each other? Perhaps the King may confess that Peter was in the right, and Peter maintain himself to have been wrong. You shall hear from me again on tuesday.

Your affectionate Brother

John.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 123, p. 298, note.

<sup>2</sup> George III died on the 29th of January 1820. Dr. Wolcot had died over a year before that date, on the 14th of January 1819.

1820

Letter 175

175. To FANNY KEATS. Tuesday 8 February 1820.

Address: Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Pancras Lane | Queen  
Street Cheapside

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 7 o'clock FE 9 1820.

Wentworth Place

Tuesday morn.

My dear Fanny—

I had a slight return of fever last night, which terminated favourably, and I am now tolerably well, though weak from small quantity of food to which I am obliged to confine myself: I am sure a mouse would starve upon it. M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie came yesterday. I have a very pleasant room for a sick person. A Sopha bed is made up for me in the front Parlour which looks on to the grass plot as you remember M<sup>rs</sup> Dilkes does. How much more comfortable than a dull room up stairs, where one gets tired of the pattern of the bed curtains. Besides I see all that passes—for instance now, this morning, if I had been in my own room I should not have seen the coals brought in. On Sunday between the hours of twelve and one I descried a Pot boy. I conjectured it might be the one o'Clock beer—Old women with bobbins and red cloaks and unassuming bonnets I see creeping about the heath. Gipseys after hare skins and silver spoons. Then goes by a fellow with a wooden clock under his arm that strikes a hundred and more. Then comes the old french emigrant, (who has been very well to do in france) with his hands joined behind on his hips, and his face full of political schemes. Then passes M<sup>r</sup> David Lewis<sup>1</sup> a very goodnatured, good-looking old gentleman whas (<for who>) has been very kind to Tom and George and me. As for those fellows the Brickmakers they are always passing to and fro. I mus'n't forget the two old maiden Ladies in well walk who have a Lap dog between them that they are very anxious about. It is a corpulent Little Beast whom it is necessary to coax along with an ivory-tipp'd cane. Carlo our Neighbour M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne's dog and it meet sometimes. Lappy thinks Carlo a devil of a fellow and so do his Mistresses. Well they may—he would sweep 'em all down at a run; all for the Joke of it. I shall desire him to peruse the fable of the

<sup>1</sup> See Letter 94, p. 236, note 2.



Boys and the frogs: though he prefers the tongues and the Bones.<sup>1</sup> You shall hear from me again the day after tomorrow—

Your affectionate Brother  
John Keats

176. To FANNY BRAWNE. (Thursday 10 Feb. 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne.

No postmark.

My dearest Girl,

If illness makes such an agreeable variety in the manner of you(r) eyes I should wish you sometimes to be ill. I wish I had read your note before you went last night that I might have assured you how far I was from suspecting any coldness. You had a just right to be a little silent to one who speaks so plainly to you. You must believe you shall, you will that I can do nothing say nothing think nothing of you but what has its spring in the Love which has so long been my pleasure and torment. On the night I was taken ill when so violent a rush of blood came to my Lungs that I felt nearly suffocated—I assure you I felt it possible I might not survive and at that moment though(t) of nothing but you. When I said to Brown 'this is unfortunate'<sup>2</sup> I thought of you. 'Tis true that since the first two or three days other subjects have entered my head.<sup>3</sup> I shall be looking forward to Health and the Spring and a regular routine of our old Walks.

Your affectionate  
J. K.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream', iv. i. 33: *Bottom*, 'let us have the tongs and the bones.'

<sup>2</sup> It may be that consideration for his correspondent induced this moderation of speech: presumably the scene here referred to is that so graphically given by Lord Houghton who records, not that he merely 'felt it possible' he 'might not survive', but that he said to his friend, 'I know the colour of that blood,—it is arterial blood—I cannot be deceived in that colour; that drop is my death-warrant. I must die.'—H.B.F.

<sup>3</sup> This sentence indicates the lapse of perhaps about a week from the 3rd of February 1820.—H.B.F.

177. To FANNY BRAWNE. (Feb. 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne.

No postmark.

My sweet love, I shall wait patiently till to-morrow before I see you, and in the mean time, if there is any need of such a thing, assure you by your Beauty, that whenever I have at any time written on a certain unpleasant subject, it has been with your welfare impress'd upon my mind. How hurt I should have been had you ever acceded to what is, notwithstanding, very reasonable! How much the more do I love you from the general result! In my present state of Health I feel too much separated from you and could almost speak to you in the words of Lorenzo's Ghost to Isabella

Your Beauty grows upon me and I feel  
A greater love through all my essence steal.<sup>1</sup>

My greatest torment since I have known you has been the fear of you being a little inclined to the Cressid;<sup>2</sup> but that suspicion I dismiss utterly and remain happy in the surety of your Love, which I assure you is as much a wonder to me as a delight. Send me the words 'Good night' to put under my pillow.

Dearest Fanny,  
Your affectionate  
J. K.

178. To FANNY KEATS. Friday 11 Feb. 1820.<sup>3</sup>

Address: Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Pancras Lane | Queen  
Street Cheapside

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 11 FE 1820

Wentworth Place

My dear Fanny,

I am much the same as when I last wrote. I hope a little more verging towards improvement. Yesterday morning

<sup>1</sup> 'Isabella', xl. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Troilus and Cressida', III. ii. 203, see Letter 223, p. 502.

<sup>3</sup> On the same day Brown wrote to 'Master Henry Snook, at M<sup>r</sup> Lord's Academy, Tooting, Surrey', a letter from which the following passage is extracted as having a certain value in connexion with Keats's story: 'M<sup>r</sup> Keats fell very ill yesterday week, and my office of head Nurse has too much employed me to allow of my answering your letter immediately; he is

Letter 179

February

being very fine, I took a walk for a quarter of an hour in the garden and was very much refresh'd by it. You must consider no news, good news—if you do not hear from me the day after tomorrow—

Your affectionate Brother

John

179. To FANNY KEATS. *Monday 14 Feb. 1820.*

Address: Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Pancras Lane Queen  
St | Cheapside

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 14 FE 1820

Wentworth Place

Monday Morn—

My dear Fanny,

I am improving but very gradually and suspect it will be a long while before I shall be able to walk six miles—The Sun appears half inclined to shine; if he obliges us I shall take a turn in the garden this morning. No one from Town has visited me since my last. I have had so many presents of jam and jellies that they would reach side by side the length of the sideboard. I hope I shall be well before it is all consumed. I am vex'd that M<sup>r</sup> Abbey will not allow you pocket money sufficient. He has not behaved well—By detaining money from me and George when we most wanted it he has increased our expences. In consequence

somewhat better, but I'm in a very anxious state about him.—I was in hopes of you and Jack being able, during Easter, to go to the Theatre to witness our Tragedy; but no,—at Drury Lane they engaged to play it *next* Season, and I, not liking the delay, took it home.—Here, to amuse myself, I began to copy some of my favorite Hogarth's heads; they were in Indian ink as usual; when M<sup>r</sup> Severn (I think you know him) put me on another plan, and I hope to succeed. I must tell you about M<sup>r</sup> Severn, whether you know him or not: he is a young Artist, who lately strove with his fellow students for a gold medal, which the Royal Academy gives annually for the best historical painting; the subject was fixed to be the Cave of Despair as described in Spencer's poem; it was M<sup>r</sup> Severn's *second* attempt in oil colours, and therefore it might have been supposed he stood no chance of success, and yet he won it!—it has been so much approved of that he will have his expenses paid for three years during his travels on the Continent, and his Majesty is to furnish him with letters of recommendation. What think you of this? I tell it you as a proof there is still some good reward in the world for superior talent; now and then a man of talent is disregarded, but it is an error to believe that such is the common fate of true desert. This does not apply solely to genius in the arts, but to you and me and all of us, as to our general character and capability.'—H.B.F.

of such delay George was obliged to take his voyage to england which will be £150 out of his Pocket. I enclose you a Note—You shall hear from me again the day after tomorrow.

Your affectionate Brother  
John

180. To FANNY BRAWNE. (Feb. 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne

No postmark.

My dearest Girl,

According to all appearances I am to be separated from you as much as possible. How I shall be able to bear it, or whether it will not be worse than your presence now and then, I cannot tell. I must be patient, and in the mean time you must think of it as little as possible. Let me not longer detain you from going to Town—there may be no end to this imprisoning of you. Perhaps you had better not come before tomorrow evening: send me however without fail a good night.

You know our situation—what hope is there if I should be recoverd ever so soon—my very health with *(for will)* not suffer me to make any great exertion. I am recommended not even to read poetry, much less write it. I wish I had even a little hope. I cannot say forget me—but I would mention that there are impossibilities in the world. No more of this. I am not strong enough to be weaned—take no notice of it in your good night.

Happen what may I shall ever be my dearest Love

Your affectionate

J—K—

181. To FANNY BRAWNE. (Feb. 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne.

No postmark.

My dearest Girl, how could it ever have been my wish to forget you? how could I have said such a thing? The utmost stretch my mind has been capable of was to endeavour to forget you for your own sake seeing what a change (for chance) there was of my remaining in a precarious state of health. I would have borne it as I would bear death if fate was in that humour: but I should as soon

think of choosing to die as to part from you. Believe too my Love that our friends think and speak for the best, and if their best is not our best it is not their fault. When I am better I will speak with you at large on these subjects, if there is any occasion—I think there is none. I am rather nervous today perhaps from being a little recovered and suffering my mind to take little excursions beyond the doors and windows. I take it for a good sign, but as it must not be encouraged you had better delay seeing me till tomorrow. Do not take the trouble of writing much: merely send me my good night.

Remember me to your Mother and Margaret.

Your affectionate

J. K.

182. To FANNY BRAWNE. *(Feb. 1820?)*

Address: Miss Brawne

No postmark.

My dearest Fanny,

Then all we have to do is to be patient. Whatever violence I may sometimes do myself by hinting at what would appear to any one but ourselves a matter of necessity, I do not think I could bear any approach of a thought of losing you. I slept well last night, but cannot say that I improve very fast. I shall expect you tomorrow, for it is certainly better that I should see you seldom. Let me have your good night.

Your affectionate

J—K—

183. To JAMES RICE. *Monday 14 Feb. 1820.*

Address: Mr James Rice | 50 Poland Street | Oxford Street

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 16 FEB 1820

Wentworth Place

Monday Morn.

My dear Rice,

I have not been well enough to make any tolerable

182. Friends both of Keats and Miss Brawne naturally regarded the engagement as an imprudent one from the first; and the entire break-down of the poet's health must have brought all possible prudential considerations home very poignantly to his own mind as well as the minds of his friends. Some hint beyond what is expressed in the last letter had perhaps fallen from Keats in conversation,—some hint of readiness at all costs to release Miss Brawne from her engagement if she on her part were prepared to follow prudent counsels and accept such release.—H.B.F.

rejoinder to your kind Letter. I will as you advise be very chary of my health and spirits. I am sorry to hear of your relapse and hypochondriac symptoms attending it. Let us hope for the best as you say. I shall follow your example in looking to the future good rather than brooding upon present ill. I have not been so worn with lengthen'd illnesses as you have therefore cannot answer you on your own ground with respect to those haunting and deformed thoughts and feelings you speak of. When I have been or supposed myself in health I have had my share of them, especially within this last year. I may say that for 6 Months before I was taken ill I had not passed a tranquil day. Either that gloom overspread me or I was suffering under some passionate feeling, or if I turn'd to versify that acerbated the poison of either sensation. The Beauties of Nature had lost their power over me. How astonishingly (here I must premise that illness as far as I can judge in so short a time has relieved my Mind of a load of deceptive thoughts and images and makes me perceive things in a truer light)—How astonishingly does the chance of leaving the world impress a sense of its natural beauties on us. Like poor Falstaff, though I do not babble, I think of green fields.<sup>1</sup> I muse with the greatest affection on every flower I have known from my infancy—their shapes and colours are as<sup>2</sup> new to me as if I had just created them with a superhuman fancy. It is because they are connected with the most thoughtless and happiest moments of our Lives. I have seen foreign flowers in hothouses of the most beautiful nature, but I do not care a straw for them. The simple flowers of our spring are what I want to see again.

Brown has left the inventive and taken to the imitative art—he is doing his forte which is copying Hogarth's heads. He has just made a purchase of the methodist meeting Picture,<sup>3</sup> which gave me a horrid dream a few nights ago. I hope I shall sit under the trees with you again in some such place as the isle of Wight. I do not mind a game at cards in a saw pit or waggon; but if ever you catch me on a stage coach in the winter full against the wind bring me down with a brace of bullets and I promise not to 'peach'.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Henry V', II. iii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Keats wrote 'as are'.

<sup>3</sup> Hogarth's 'Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism: a Medley' (1762). Brown's 'Hogarth's heads' may be seen in his room at Wentworth Place; they are admirably done in sepia.

Re⟨me⟩mber me to Reynolds and say how much I should like to hear from him: that Brown returned immediately after he went on Sunday, and that I was vex'd at forgetting to ask him to lunch for as he went towards the gate I saw he was fatigued and hungry.

I am

my dear Rice

ever most sincer⟨e⟩ly yours

John Keats

I have broken this open to let you know I was surprised at seeing it on the table this morning, thinking it had gone long ago<sup>1</sup>

184. To FANNY KEATS. *Saturday 19 Feb. 1820.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Pancras Lane. Queen St | Cheapside.

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 19 FE 1820

My dear Fanny,

Being confined almost entirely to vegetable food and the weather being at the same time so much against me, I cannot say I have much improved since I wrote last. The Doctor tells me there are no dangerous Symptoms about me and that quietness of mind and fine weather will restore me. Mind my advice to be very careful to wear warm cloathing in a thaw. I will write again on Tuesday when I hope to send you good news.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

185. To FANNY BRAWNE. *⟨Feb. 1820?⟩*

*Address:* Miss Brawne.

*No postmark.*

My dearest Fanny,

I read your note in bed last night, and that might be the reason of my sleeping so much better. I think M<sup>r</sup> Brown is right in supposing you may stop too long with me, so very nervous as I am. Send me every evening a written Good night. If you come for a few minutes about six it may be the best time. Should you ever fancy me too low-spirited I must warn you to ascribe it to the medicine I am at

<sup>1</sup> Which accounts for the disparity between Keats's weekday and the dated postmark.

present taking which is of a nerve-shaking nature. I shall impute any depression I may experience to this cause. I have been writing with a vile old pen the whole week, which is excessively ungallant. The fault is in the Quill: I have mended it and still it is very much inclin'd to make blind es. However these last lines are in a much better style of penmanship thof a little disfigured by the smear of black currant jelly; which has made a little mark on one of the Pages of Brown's Ben Jonson, the very best book he has. I have lick'd it but it remains very purple<sup>1</sup>—I did not know whether to say purple or blue so in the mixture of the thought wrote purplue which may be an excellent name for a colour made up of those two, and would suit well to start next spring. Be very careful of open doors and windows and going without your duffle grey—God bless you Love!—

J. Keats—

P.S. I am sitting in the back room. Remember me to your Mother—

186. To FANNY BRAWNE. (Feb. 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne.

No postmark.

My dear Fanny,

Do not let your mother suppose that you hurt me by writing at night. For some reason or other your last night's note was not so treasureable as former ones. I would fain that you call me *Love* still. To see you happy and in high spirits<sup>2</sup> is a great consolation to me—still let me believe that you are not half so happy as my restoration would make you. I am nervous, I own, and may think myself worse than I really am; if so you must indulge me, and pamper with that sort of tenderness you have manifested towards me in different Letters. My sweet creature when I look back upon the pains and torments I have suffer'd for you from the day I left you to go to the isle of Wight;

<sup>1</sup> Keats wrote 'purplue', turned the first minim of the second 'u' into an 'e', and struck out the rest.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Brawne had much natural pride and buoyancy, and was quite capable of affecting higher spirits and less concern than she really felt. But as to the genuineness of her attachment to Keats some of those who knew her personally have no doubt whatever.—H.B.F.



the extasies in which I have pass'd some days and the miseries in their turn, I wonder the more at the Beauty which has kept up the spell so fervently. When I send this round I shall be in the front parlour watching to see you show yourself for a minute in the garden. How illness stands as a barrier betwixt me and you! Even if I was well—I must make myself as good a Philosopher as possible. Now I have had opportunities of passing nights anxious and awake I have found other thoughts intrude upon me. "If I should die," said I to myself, "I have left no immortal work behind me—nothing to make my friends proud of my memory—but I have lov'd the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remember'd."<sup>1</sup> Thoughts like these came very feebly whilst I was in health and every pulse beat for you—now you divide with this (may I say it?) "last infirmity of noble minds"<sup>2</sup> all my reflection.

God bless you, Love.

J. Keats.

187. To FANNY BRAWNE. (Feb. 1820?)

Address: Mrs Brawne

No postmark.

My dearest Girl,

You spoke of having been unwell in your last note: have you recover'd? That note has been a great delight to me. I am stronger than I was: the Doctors say there is very little the matter with me, but I cannot believe them till the weight and tightness of my Chest is mitigated. I will not indulge or pain myself by complaining of my long separation from you. God alone knows whether I am destined to taste of happiness with you: at all events I myself know thus much, that I consider it no mean Happiness to have lov'd you thus far—if it is to be no further I shall not be unthankful—if I am to recover, the day of my recovery shall see me by your side from which nothing shall separate me. If well you are the only medicine that can keep me so. Perhaps, aye surely, I am writing in too depress'd a state of mind—ask your Mother to come and see me—she will bring you a better account than mine.

Ever your affectionate

John Keats.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 201, p. 480.

<sup>2</sup> See 'Lycidas', l. 71.

1820

Letter 189

188. To FANNY BRAWNE. (*Thursday 24 Feb. 1820?*)

*Address:* Miss Brawne.

*No postmark.*

My dearest Girl,

Indeed I will not deceive you with respect to my Health. This is the fact as far as I know. I have been confined three weeks and am not yet well—this proves that there is something wrong about me which my constitution will either conquer or give way to. Let us hope for the best. Do you hear the Thrush singing over the field? I think it is a sign of mild weather—so much the better for me. Like all Sinners now I am ill I philosophise aye out of my attachment to every thing, Trees, flowers, Thrushes Spring, Summer, Claret &c &c—aye every thing but you— —my Sister would be glad of my company a little longer. That Thrush is a fine fellow I hope he was fortunate in his choice this year. Do not send any more of my Books home. I have a great pleasure in the thought of you looking on them.

Ever yours

my sweet Fanny  
J. K.

189. To FANNY KEATS. *Thursday 24 Feb. 1820.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 25 FE 1820

Wentworth Place Thursday

My dear Fanny,

I am sorry to hear you have been so unwell: now you are better, keep so. Remember to be very careful of your cloathing—this climate requires the utmost care. There has been very little alteration in me lately. I am much the same as when I wrote last. When I am well enough to return to my old diet I shall get stronger. If my recovery should be delay'd long I will ask M<sup>r</sup> Abbey to let you visit me—Keep up your Spirits as well as you can. You shall hear soon again from me—

Your affectionate Brother

John—

*Letter 190*

*February*

*From BRYAN WALLER PROCTER to KEATS. Friday (25 Feb. 1820).*

*Address: John Keats Esq<sup>re</sup>*

*No postmark.*

Friday  
25 Store Street  
Bedford Square

My dear Sir,

I send you 'Marcian Colonna' which think as well of as you can. There is, I think, (at least in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> parts) a stronger infusion of poetry in it than in the Sicilian Story—but I may be mistaken.<sup>1</sup> I am looking forward with some impatience to the publication of your book. Will you write my name in an early copy and send it to me? \* Is not this a 'prodigious bold request'? I hope that you are getting quite well. Believe me very sincerely yours

B. W. Procter.

\* This was written before I saw you the other day—Some time ago I scribbled half a dozen lines, under an idea of continuing and completing a poem to be called 'The Deluge'—what do you think of the Subject? The Greek Deluge I mean. I wish you would set me the example of leaving off the word 'Sir'.

190. *To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. Monday 28 Feb. 1820.*

*Address: Mr J. H. Reynolds | 18 Portland Street | Poland Street*

*Postmarks: LOMBARD STREET and 28 FE 1820*

My dear Reynolds,

I have been improving since you saw me: my nights are better which I think is a very encouraging thing. You mention your cold in rather too slighting a manner—if you travel outside have some flannel against the wind—which I hope will not keep on at this rate when you are in the Packet boat. Should it rain do not stop upon deck though the Passengers should vomit themselves inside out. Keep under Hatches from all sort of wet.

I am pretty well provided with Books at present, when you return I may give you a commission or two. Mr B. C.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Barry Cornwall', Bryan Waller Procter (1787–1874): 'Dramatic Scenes', 1819; 'Marcian Colonna' and 'A Sicilian Story', 1820, &c. Keats wrote of this attention of Procter's both to Fanny Brawne and to Dilke; but he seems to have reserved for his intimate kindred spirit Reynolds his estimate of the merits of Procter's books, while sharing between Reynolds and others his appreciation of the author's politeness. He sent Procter a copy of 'Lamia, Isabella, &c.' (now in the Forster collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum) inscribing it to 'B. W. Procter Esq<sup>r</sup> | with y<sup>e</sup> Authors |

has sent me not only his Sicilian Story but yesterday his Dramatic Scenes—this is very polite and I shall do what I can to make him sensible I think so. I confess they tease me—they are composed of Amiability—the Seasons, the Leaves, the Moon &c. upon which he rings (according to Hunt's expression) triple bob majors. However that is nothing—I think he likes poetry for its own sake, not his. I hope I shall soon be well enough to proceed with my fa(e)ries<sup>1</sup> and set you about the notes on Sundays and Stray-days. If I had been well enough I should have liked to cross the water with you. Brown wishes you a pleasant voyage—Have fish for dinner at the sea ports, and dont forget a bottle of Claret. You will not meet with so much to hate at Brussels as at Paris. Remember me to all my friends. If I were well enough I would paraphrase an Ode of Horace's<sup>2</sup> for you, on your embarking in the seventy years ago style—the Packet will bear a comparison with a roman galley at any rate.

Ever yours affectionately

J. Keats

191. To FANNY BRAWNE. (Monday 28 Feb. 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne

No postmark.

My dearest Fanny,

I had a better night last night than I have had since my attack, and this morning I am the same as when you saw me. I have been turning over two volumes of Letters written between Ro(u)sseau and two Ladies in the perplexed strain of mingled finesse and sentiment in which the Ladies and gentlemen of those days were so clever, and which is still prevalent among Ladies of this Country who live in a state of re(a)soning romance. The Likeness however only extends to the mannerism not to the dexterity. What would Rousseau have said at seeing our little correspondence!<sup>3</sup> What would his Ladies have said! I don't care much—I would sooner have Shakspeare's opinion

best regards.' In the same collection is a holograph of the sonnet 'On the Grasshopper and the Cricket', dated 'Dec' 30 1816' and certified 'This is Keats's writing. B.W.P.'

<sup>1</sup> i.e. 'The Cap and Bells'.

<sup>2</sup> He probably had in mind *Odes*, 1. iii.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 134, p. 352.

about the matter. The common gossiping of washerwomen must be less disgusting than the continual and eternal fence and attack of Rousseau and these sublime Petticoats. One calls herself Clara and her friend Julia two of Ro(u)sseau's Heroines—they all *<for at>* the same time christen poor Jean Jacques St. Preux—who is the pure cavalier of his famous novel. Thank God I am born in England with our own great Men before my eyes—Thank god that you are fair and can love me without being Letter-written and sentimentaliz'd into it.—M<sup>r</sup> Barry Cornwall<sup>1</sup> has sent me another Book, his first, with a polite note. I must do what I can to make him sensible of the esteem I have for his kindness. If this north east would take a turn it would be so much the better for me. Good bye, my love, my dear love, my beauty—

love me for ever.

J— K—

192. To FANNY BRAWNE. *<Feb. 1820?>*

Address: Miss Brawne.

No postmark.

My dearest Girl,

I continue much the same as usual, I think a little better. My Spirits are better also, and consequently I am more resign'd to my confinement. I dare not think of you much or write much to you. Remember me to all.

Ever your affectionate

John Keats.

193. To FANNY BRAWNE. *<Feb. 1820?>*

Address: Miss Brawne.

No postmark.

My dear Fanny,

I think you had better not make any long stay with me when M<sup>r</sup> Brown is at home—whe<sup>(n)</sup>e<sup>(r)</sup> he goes out you may bring your work. You will have a pleasant walk to

<sup>1</sup> The reference to Barry Cornwall indicates that this letter was written about the 27th or 28th of February 1820; for to Reynolds (see Letter 190) Keats recounts this same affair of Procter's first book as having happened 'yesterday', expressing his sense of obligation in almost the same terms as in this letter.

day. I shall see you pass. I shall follow you with my eyes over the Heath. Will you come towards evening instead of before dinner—when you are gone, 'tis past—if you do not come till the evening I have something to look forward to all day. Come round to my window for a moment when you have read this. Thank your Mother, for the preserves, for me. The raspberry will be too sweet not having any acid; therefore as you are so good a girl I shall make you a present of it. Good bye

My sweet Love!  
J. Keats.

194. To FANNY BRAWNE. *(Feb. 1820?)*

*Address:* Miss Brawne.

*No postmark.*

My dearest Fanny,

The power of your benediction is of not so weak a nature as to pass from the ring in four and twenty hours—it is like a sacred Chalice once consecrated and ever consecrate. I shall kiss your name and mine where your Lips have been—Lips! why should a poor prisoner as I am talk about such things. Thank God, though I hold them the dearest pleasures in the universe, I have a consolation independent of them in the certainty of your affection. I could write a song in the style of Tom Moore's *Pathetic about Memory*<sup>1</sup> if that would be any relief to me. No 'twould not.

<sup>1</sup> Probably the following:

There's not a look, a word of thine  
My soul hath e'er forgot;  
Thou ne'er hast bid a ringlet shine,  
Nor given thy locks one graceful twine,  
Which I remember not!

There never yet a murmur fell  
From that beguiling tongue,  
Which did not, with a lingering spell,  
Upon my charmed senses dwell,  
Like something Heaven had sung!

Ah! that I could, at once, forget  
All, all that haunts me so—  
And yet, thou witching girl!—and yet,  
To die were sweeter than to let  
The loved remembrance go!

I will be as obdurate as a Robin. I will not sing in a cage. Health is my expected heaven and you are my Houri—this word I believe is both singular and plural—if only plural, never mind—you are a thousand of them.

Ever yours affectionately  
my dearest—

You had better not come to-day.

J. K.

195. To MRS. WYLIE. *Friday* (March 1820?)

*Address:* M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie | 3<sup>rd</sup> Romney Street | Westminster.

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and ... 4 1820

Wentworth Place  
Friday Morn.<sup>1</sup>

My dear M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie,

I have been very negligent in not letting you hear from me for so long a time considering the anxiety I know you feel for me. Charles has been here this morning and will tell you that I am better. Just as he came in I was sitting down to write to you, and I shall not let his visit supersede these few lines. Charles enquired whether I had heard from George. It is impossible to guess whether he has landed yet, and if he has, it will take at least a month for any communication to reach us. I hope you keep your spirits a great height above the freezing point, and live in expectation of good news next summer. Louisville is not

No, if this slighted heart must see  
Its faithful pulse decay,  
Oh! let it die, remembering thee,  
And, like the burnt aroma, be  
Consumed in sweets away!

<sup>1</sup> This letter is difficult to date with any degree of accuracy. Amy Lowell placed it 'before M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie had made her first visit, some time, probably, toward the end of February'. The date of the first visit of Mrs. Wylie recorded by Keats was Monday, the 7th of February 1820 (see Letter 175, p. 459), and the only other visit Keats mentions is that in Letter 197 (p. 477) which is undated though presumed to have been written early in March. George had sailed from Liverpool about the 1st of February, and there is good reason to believe that he had rejoined his wife and family in Kentucky by the middle of March. On the 1st of April Keats wrote to his sister that he had not heard from George since he left Liverpool and apparently Mrs. Wylie was the first to learn of George's arrival in America, as in the letter to Fanny Keats postmarked '21 Ap 1820' John says—'M<sup>r</sup> H. Wylie call'd on me yesterday with a letter from George to his mother: George is safe at the other side of the water, perhaps by this time arrived at his home.'

such a Monstrous distance: if Georgiana liv'd at York it would be just as far off. You see George will make nothing of the journey here and back. His absence will have been perhaps a fortunate event for Georgiana, for the pleasure of his return will be so great that it will wipe away the consciousness of many troubles felt before very deeply. She will see him return'd from us and be convinced that the separation is not so very formidable although the Atlantic is between. If George succeeds it will be better certainly that they should stop in America: if not why not return? It is better in ill luck to have at least the comfort of ones friends than to be shipwreck'd among Americans. But I have good hopes as far as I can judge from what I have heard from George. He should by this time be taught Alertness and Carefulness—If they should stop in America for five or six years let us hope they may have about three Children: then the eldest will be getting old enough to be society. The very crying will keep their ears employed, and their spirits from being melancholy. M<sup>rs</sup> Millar I hear continues confined to her Chamber—if she would take my advice I should recommender to keep it till the middle of April and then go to some Sea-town in Devonshire which is sheltered from the east wind—which blows down the channel very briskly even in April.<sup>1</sup> Give my Compliments to Miss Millar and Miss Waldegrave

Your affectionate friend

⟨torn⟩ me to Charles.

John Keats.

196. To FANNY BRAWNE. ⟨March 1820?⟩

Address: Miss Brawne

No postmark.

My dearest Love,

You must not stop so long in the cold—I have been suspecting that window to be open.—You⟨r⟩ Note half-cured me. When I want some more oranges I will tell you these are just a propos. I am kept from food so feel rather weak—otherwise very well. Pray do not stop so long up

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Millar, or Miller, died some time before the 18th of June 1820; see the letter from George Keats to John, p. 494.



stairs—it makes me uneasy—come every now and then and stop a half minute. Remember me to your Mother

Your ever affectionate

J. Keats.

197. To FANNY BRAWNE. (*March 1820?*)

Address: Miss Brawne

No postmark.

Sweetest Fanny,

You fear, sometimes, I do not love you so much as you wish? My dear Girl I love you ever and ever and without reserve. The more I have known you the more have I lov'd. In every way—even my jealousies have been agonies of Love, in the hottest fit I ever had I would have died for you. I have vex'd you too much. But for Love! Can I help it? You are always new.<sup>1</sup> The last of your kisses was ever the sweetest; the last smile the brightest; the last movement the gracefulest. When you pass'd my window home yesterday, I was fill'd with as much admiration as if I had then seen you for the first time. You uttered a half complaint once that I only lov'd your Beauty.<sup>2</sup> Have I nothing else then to love in you but that? Do not I see a heart naturally furnish'd with wings imprison itself with me? No ill prospect has been able to turn your thoughts a moment from me. This perhaps should be as much a subject of sorrow as joy—but I will not talk of that. Even if you did not love me I could not help an entire devotion to you: how much more deeply then must I feel for you knowing you love me. My Mind has been the most discontented and restless one that ever was put into a body too small for it. I never felt my Mind repose upon anything with complete and undistracted enjoyment—upon no person but you. When you are in the room my thoughts never fly out of window: you always concentrate my whole senses. The anxiety shown about our Loves in your last note is an immense pleasure to me: however you must not suffer such

<sup>1</sup> Surely this is Keats's retraction of the lines in 'Ever let the Fancy roam' (Letter 98, p. 262): 'Where's the Maid Whose lip mature is ever new? . . . Fancy has her . . . Never fulsome, ever new . . .'

<sup>2</sup> See Letter 136, p. 355, in which Keats answers some remarks of Miss Brawne's on this subject.

speculations to molest you any more: nor will I any more believe you can have the least pique against me. Brown is gone out—but here is Mr<sup>s</sup> Wylie<sup>1</sup>—when she is gone I shall be awake for you.—Remembrances to your Mother.

Your affectionate

J. Keats.

198. To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE. *Saturday*  
4 March 1820.

Address: Mr Cha<sup>s</sup>. W. Dilke | 3 Great Smith Street | Westminster.

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 4 MR 1820

My dear Dilke,

Since I saw you I have been gradually, too gradually perhaps, improving; and though under an interdict with respect to animal food living upon pseudo victuals, Brown says I have pick'd up a little flesh, lately. If I can keep off inflammation for the next six weeks I trust I shall do very well. You certainly should have been at Martin's dinner for making an index is surely as dull work as engraving. Have you heard that the Bookseller is going to tie himself himself to the manger eat or not as he pleases? He says Rice shall have his foot on the fender notwithstanding. Reynolds is going to sail on the salt seas. Brown has been mightily progressing with his Hogarth.<sup>2</sup> A damn'd melancholy picture it is, and during the first week of my illness it gave me a psalm singing nightmare, that made me almost faint away in my sleep. I know I am better, for I can bear the Picture. I have experienced a specimen of great politeness from Mr Barry Cornwall. He has sent me his books. Some time ago he had given his first publish'd book to Hunt for me; Hunt forgot to give it and Barry Cornwall thinking I had received it must have though<t> me <a> very neglectful fellow. Notwithstan<din>g he sent me his

<sup>1</sup> The significant *but* indicates that the absence of Brown was still, as was natural, more or less a condition of the presence of Miss Brawne. That Keats had, however, or thought he had, some reason for this condition, beyond the mere delicacy of lovers, is dimly shadowed by the cold *My dear Fanny* with which in Letter 193 the condition was first expressly prescribed, and more than shadowed by the agonized expression of a morbid sensibility in two letters which will be found further on. Probably a man in sound health would have found the cause trivial enough.—H.B.F.

<sup>2</sup> See Letter 183, p. 465.

second book<sup>1</sup> and on my explaining that I had not received his first he sent me that also. I am sorry to see by Mr<sup>s</sup> D's note that she has been so unwell with the spasms. Does she continue the Medicines that benefited her so much? I am affraid not. Remember me to her and say I shall not expect her at Hampstead next week unless the Weather changes for the warmer. It is better to run no chance of a supernumer<sup>(ar)</sup>y cold in March. As for you you must come. You must improve in your penmanship; your writing is like the speaking of a child of three years old, very understandable to its father but to no one else. The worst is it looks well—no that is not the worst—the worst is, it is worse than Bailey's. Bailey's looks illegible and may perchance be read; your's looks very legible and may perchance not be read. I would endeavour to give you a fac simile of your word Thistlewood if I were not minded on the instant that Lord chesterfield has done some such thing to his Son.<sup>2</sup> Now I would not bathe in the same River with lord C. though I had the upper hand of the stream. I am grieved that in writing and speaking it is necessary to make use of the same particles as he did. Cobbet<sup>(t)</sup> is expected to come in. O that I had two double plumpers for him. The ministry are not so inimical to him but ~~they~~ it would like to put him out of Coventry. Casting my eye on the other side I see a long word written in a most vile manner,<sup>3</sup> unbecoming a Critic. You must recollect I have served no apprenticeship to old plays. If the only copies of the greek and Latin Authors had been made by you, Bailey and Haydon they were as good as lost. ~~The~~ It has been said that the Character of a Man may be known by his handwriting—if the Character of the age may be known by the average goodness of said, what a slovenly age we live in. Look at Queen Elizabeth's Latin exercises and blush. Look at Milton's hand. I cant say a word for shakespeare.

Your sincere friend

John Keats

<sup>1</sup> See Procter's letter to Keats, p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> See Dobrée's 'Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope', vol. iv, p. 1668, letter 1755 dated 28 January, O.S. 1751.

<sup>3</sup> Doubtless the word 'supernumerary', from which Keats had dropped the penultimate *ar*. The next sentence has reference, I presume, to Dilke's continuation of Dodsley's Collection of Old Plays.

199. To FANNY BRAWNE. (March 1820)

Address: Miss Brawne

No postmark.

My dear Fanny,

I am much better this morning than I was a week ago: indeed I improve a little every day. I rely upon taking a walk with you upon the first of may: in the mean time undergoing a babylonish captivity I shall not be jew enough to hang up my harp upon a willow,<sup>1</sup> but rather endeavour to clear up my arrears in versifying and with returning health begin upon something new: pursuant to which resolution it will be necessary to have my or rather Taylor's manuscript,<sup>2</sup> which you, if you please, will send by my Messenger either to day or tomorrow. Is M<sup>r</sup> D.<sup>3</sup> with you today? You appear'd very much fatigued last night: you must look a little brighter this morning. I shall not suffer my little girl ever to be obscured like glass breath'd upon, but always bright as it is her *nature to*.<sup>4</sup> Feeding upon sham victuals and sitting by the fire will completely annul me. I have no need of an enchanted wax figure to duplicate me for I am melting in my proper person before the fire.<sup>5</sup> If you meet with any thing better (worse) than common in your Magazines let me see it. Good bye

my sweetest Girl  
J. K—

200. To FANNY BRAWNE. (March 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne

No postmark.

My dearest Fanny, whe⟨ne⟩ver you know me to be alone, come, no matter what day. Why will you go out this weather? I shall not fatigue myself with writing too

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Psalm cxxxvii. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably the manuscript of 'Lamia, Isabella, &c.', then about to be sent to press.

<sup>3</sup> I suppose Mr. Dilke.

<sup>4</sup> If this is an allusion to Dr. Watts's line, 'For 'tis their nature too', was Keats guilty of the common misquotation, or did he underline it to mark the error?

<sup>5</sup> Referring to the superstition that a person's death might be compassed by melting a waxen image of the person before a fire: Dante Gabriel Rossetti embodied it in his 'Sister Helen'.—H.B.F.

much I promise you. Brown says I am getting stouter. I rest well and from last night do not remember any thing horrid in my dream, which is a capital symptom, for any organic derangement always occasions a Phantasmagoria. It will be a nice idle amusement to hunt after a motto for my Book which I will have if lucky enough to hit upon a fit one<sup>1</sup>—not intending to write a preface. I fear I am too late with my note—you are gone out—you will be as cold as a topsail in a north latitude—I advise you to furl yourself and come in a doors.

Good bye Love.

J. K.

201. To FANNY BRAWNE. (March 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne—

No postmark.

My dearest Fanny, I slept well last night and am no worse this morning for it. Day by day if I am not deceived I get a more unrestrain'd use of my Chest. The nearer a racer gets to the Goal the more his anxiety becomes, so I lingering upon the borders of health feel my impatience increase. Perhaps on your account I have imagined my illness more serious than it is: how horrid was the chance of slipping into the ground instead of into your arms—the difference is amazing Love. Death must come at last; Man must die, as Shallow says;<sup>2</sup> but before that is my fate I feign would try what more pleasures than you have given, so sweet a creature as you can give. Let me have another opportunity of years before me and I will not die without being remember'd.<sup>3</sup> Take care of yourself dear that we may both be well in the Summer. I do not at all fatigue myself with writing, having merely to put a line or two here and there, a Task which would worry a stout state of the body and mind, but which just suits me as I can do no more.

Your affectionate

J. K—

<sup>1</sup> The book appeared without any motto.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. '2 Henry IV', III. ii. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Letter 186, p. 468.

202. To FANNY BRAWNE. (*March 1820?*)

Address: Miss Brawne

*No postmark.*

My dearest Fanny,

Though I shall see you in so short a time I cannot forbear sending you a few lines. You say I did not give you yesterday a minute account of my health. To-day I have left off the Medicine which I took to keep the pulse down and I find I can do very well without it, which is a very favourable sign, as it shows that there is no inflammation remaining. You think I may be wearied at night you say: it is my best time; I am at my best about eight o'clock. I received a Note from Mr Proctor<sup>1</sup> to-day. He says he cannot pay me a visit this weather as he is fearful of an inflammation in the Chest. What a horrid climate this is? or what careless inhabitants it has? You are one of them. My dear girl do not make a joke of it: do not expose yourself to the cold. There's the Thrush again—I can't afford it—he'll run me up a pretty Bill for Music—besides he ought to know I deal at Clementi's.<sup>2</sup> How can you bear so long an imprisonment at Hampstead? I shall always remember it with all the gusto that a monopolizing carle should. I could build an Altar to you for it.

Your affectionate

J. K.

203. To FANNY KEATS. *Monday 20 March 1820.*

Address: Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey<sup>s</sup> Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow.

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 20 MR 1820


My dear Fanny,

According to your desire I write to day. It must be but a few lines for I have been attack'd several times with a palpitation at the heart and the Doctor says I must not make the slightest exertion. I am much the same to day as I have been for a week past. They say 'tis nothing but debility and will entirely cease on my recovery of my strength, which is the object of my present diet. As the

<sup>1</sup> B. W. Procter: see Letter 190, p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> Muzio Clementi (1752–1832), composer and pianist, and senior partner in the firm of musical-instrument makers and music-publishers of 26 Cheap-side, then styled Clementi, Collard, Davis and Collard.

Doctor will not suffer me to write I shall ask M<sup>r</sup> Brown to let you hear news of me for the future if I should not get stronger soon. I hope I shall be well enough to come and see your flowers in bloom—

Ever your most  
affectionate Brother   
John —

204. To FANNY BRAWNE. (March 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne

No postmark.

My dearest Girl,

As, from the last part of my note you must see how gratified I have been by your remaining at home, you might perhaps conceive that I was equally bias'd the other way by your going to Town, I cannot be easy to-night without telling you you would be wrong to suppose so. Though I am pleased with the one, I am not displeased with the other. How do I dare to write in this manner about my pleasures and displeasures? I will tho' whilst I am an invalid, in spite of you. Good night, Love!

J. K.

205. To FANNY BRAWNE. (March 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne

No postmark.

My dearest Girl,

In consequence of our company—I suppose I shall not see you before tomorrow. I am much better today indeed all I have to complain of is want of strength and a little tightness in the Chest. I envied Sam's walk with you to day; which I will not do again as I may get very tired of envying. I imagine you now sitting in your new black dress which I like so much and if I were a little less selfish and more enthusiastic I should run round—and surprise you with a knock at the door. I fear I am too prudent for a dying kind of Lover. Yet, there is a great difference between going off in warm blood like Romeo, and making one's exit like a frog in a frost I had nothing particular to say to day, but not intending that there shall be any interruption to our correspondence (which at some future time I propose offering to Murray) I write something!

God bless you my sweet Love! Illness is a long lane, but I see you at the end of it, and shall mend my pace as well as possible

J. K.

206. To FANNY BRAWNE. (March 1820?)

Address: Miss Brawne

No postmark.

Dear Girl,

Yesterday you must have thought me worse than I really was. I assure you there was nothing but regret at being obliged to forego an embrace which has so many times been the highest gust<sup>1</sup> of my Life. I would not care for health without it. Sam would not come in—I wanted merely to ask him how you were this morning. When one is not quite well we turn for relief to those we love: this is no weakness of spirit in me: you know when in health I thought of nothing but you; when I shall again be so it will be the same. Brown has been mentioning to me that some hint from Sam, last night, occasions him some uneasiness. He whispered something to you concerning Brown and old Mr Dilke which had the complexion of being something derogatory to the former. It was connected with an anxiety about Mr D. Sr's death and an anxiety to set out for Chichester. These sort of hints point out their own solution: one cannot pretend to a delicate ignorance on the subject: you understand the whole matter. If any one, my sweet Love, has misrepresented, to you, to your Mother or Sam, any circumstances which are at all likely, at a tenth remove, to create suspicions among people who from their own interested notions slander others, pray tell me: for I feel the least attain on the disinterested character of Brown very deeply. Perhaps Reynolds or some other of my friends may come towards evening, therefore you may choose whether you will come

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dryden's translation of the Nineteenth Elegy of Ovid, ll. 17-18:

'With what a Gust, ye Gods, we then imbrac'd!  
How every kiss was dearer than the last!'

and 'Twelfth Night', 1. iii. 33-4: 'To allay the gust he hath in quarrelling'.



to see me early to-day before or after dinner as you may think fit. Remember me to your Mother and tell her to drag you to me if you show the least reluctance—

[Signature missing.]

207. To FANNY KEATS. *Saturday 1 April 1820.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow

*Postmark:* HAMPSTEAD: date illegible.

Wentworth Place

April 1<sup>st</sup>

My dear Fanny—

I am getting better every day and should think myself quite well were I not reminded every now and then by faintness and a tightness in the Chest. Send your Spaniel over to Hampstead for I think I know where to find a Master or Mistress for him. You may depend upon it if you were even to turn it loose in the common road it would soon find an owner. If I keep improving as I have done I shall be able to come over to you in the course of a few weeks. I should take the advantage of your being in Town but I cannot bear the City though I have already ventured as far as the west end for the purpose of seeing Mr Haydon's Picture which is just finished and has m<sup>a</sup>de its appearance.<sup>1</sup> I have not heard from George yet since he left liverpool. Mr Brown wrote to him as from me the other day—Mr B. wrote two Letters to Mr Abbey concerning me—Mr A. took no notice and of course Mr B. must give up such a correspondence when as the man said all the Letters are on one side. I write with greater ease than I had thought, th<sup>e</sup>refore you shall soon hear from me again.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the private view of the picture of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem. The picture was exhibited at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, and the private view was on Saturday, the 25th of March 1820. In Haydon's account of the triumphs of that day ('Autobiography', first edition of Taylor's 'Life', 1, 371), he says: 'The room was full. Keats and Hazlitt were up in a corner, really rejoicing.' 'The Morning Post', March 30, 1820, names Sir W. Scott, Messrs. C. Lamb, Keats, and Procter, among the 'principal persons, distinguished for rank and talent, in the company'.

208. To FANNY KEATS. (*April 1820.*)

Address: Miss Keats—.

*No postmark.*

My dear Fanny

Mr Brown is waiting for me to take a walk. Mr<sup>(s)</sup> Dilke is on a visit next door and desires her Love to you. The Dog shall be taken care of and for his name I shall go and look in the parish register<sup>1</sup> where he was born I still continue on the mending hand.

Your affectionate Brother  
John —

209. To FANNY KEATS. *Wednesday 12 April 1820.*

Address: Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow—

Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD and 12 AP 1820

Wentworth Place  
12 April.

My dear Fanny—

Excuse these shabby scraps of paper I send you—and also from endeavouring to give you any consolation just at present for though my health is tolerably well I am too nervous to enter into any discussion in which my heart is concerned. Wait patiently and take care of your health being especially carefull to keep yourself from low spirits which are great enemies to health. You are young and have only need of a little patience. I am not yet able to bear the fatigue of coming to Walthamstow though I have been to Town once or twice. I have thought of taking a change of air. You shall hear from me immediately on my moving any where. I will ask Mr<sup>s</sup> Dilke to pay you a visit if the weather holds fine, the first time I see her. The Dog is being attended to like a Prince.

Your affectionate Brother  
John

208. There is little doubt that this letter was written between the 1st and 12th of April 1820, and was intended as an acknowledgement of the due receipt of 'the Dog'—probably to go back to Walthamstow by the person who brought the dog. On the 1st Keats wrote to his sister to send her spaniel to Hampstead, and on the 12th that it was 'being attended to like a Prince'.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 152, p. 392.

210. To FANNY KEATS. *Friday 21 April 1820.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 21 AP 1820

My dear Fanny,

I have been slowly improving since I wrote last. The Doctor assures me that there is nothing the matter with me except nervous irritability and a general weakness of the whole system which has proceeded from my anxiety of mind of late years and the too great excitement of poetry. Mr Brown is going to Scotland by the Smack, and I am advised for change of exercise and air to accompany him and give myself the chance of benefit from a Voyage. Mr H. Wylie call'd on me yesterday with a letter from George to his mother: George is safe on the other side of the water, perpsaps by this time arrived at his home. I wish you were coming to town that I might see you; if you should be coming write to me, as it is quite a trouble to get by the coaches to Walthamstow. Should you not come to Town I must see you before I sail, at Walthamstow. They tell me I must study lines and tangents and squares and circles to put a little Ballast into my mind. We shall be going in a fortnight and therefore you will see me within that space. I expected sooner, but I have not been able to venture to walk across the Country. Now the fine Weather is come you will not fine (*for find*) your time so irksome. You must be sensible how much I regret not being able to alleviate the unpleasantness of your situation, but trust my dear Fanny that better times are in wait for you.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

211. To FANNY KEATS. *Thursday 4 May 1820.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 4 MY 1820

Wentworth Place

Thursday—

My dear Fanny,

I went for the first time into the City the day before yesterday, for before I was very disinclined to encounter the Scuffle, more from nervousness than real illness; which notwithstanding I should not have suffered to conquer me if I had not made up my mind not to go to Scotland, but to remove to Kentish Town till Mr Brown returns.

Kentish Town is a Mile nearer to you than Hampstead—I have been getting gradually better but am not so well as to trust myself to the casualties of rain and sleeping out which I am liable to in visiting you. M<sup>r</sup> Brown goes on Saturday and by that time I shall have settled in my new Lodging when I will certainly venture to you. You will forgive me I hope when I confess that I endeavour to think of you as little as possible and to let George dwell upon my mind but slightly. The reason being that I am affraid to ruminate on any thing which has the shade of difficulty or melancholy in it, as that sort of cogitation is so pernicious to health, and it is only by health that I can be enabled to alleviate your situation in future. For some time you must do what you can of yourself for relief, and bear your mind up with the consciousness that your situation cannot last for ever, and that for the present you may console yourself against the reproaches of M<sup>rs</sup> Abbey. Whatever obligations you may have had to her ~~or her husband~~ you have none now as she has reproach'd you. I do not know what property you have, but I will enquire into it: be sure however that beyond the obligations that a Lodger may have to a Landlord you have none to M<sup>r</sup> Abbey. Let the surety of this make you laugh at M<sup>rs</sup> A's foolish tattle. M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke's Brother has got your dog. She is now very well—still liable to Illness. I will get her to come and see you if I can make up my mind on the propriety of introducing a stranger into Abbey's House. Be careful to let no fretting injure you(r) health as I have suffered it—health is the greatest of blessings—with *health* and *hope* we should be content to live, and so you will find as you grow older—I am

my dear Fanny

your affectionate Brother

John—

212. To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE. (May 1820.)

Address: C. W. Dilke Esq<sup>re</sup>

No postmark.

My dear Dilke,

As Brown is not to be a fixture at Ham(p)stead I have at last made up my mind to send home all lent Books. I

212. This letter has on it a pencilled memorandum assigning it to the year 1820. It would therefore seem to belong to the time just before the

should have seen you before this—but my mind (h)as been at work all over the world to find out what to do—I have my choice of three things—or at least two—South America or Surgeon to an I(n)diaman—which last I think will be my fate—I shall resolve in a few days. Remember (me) to M<sup>rs</sup> D. and Charles—and your Father and Mother.

Ever truly yours  
John Keats

213. To FANNY BRAWNE. (May 1820.)

Address: M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne

No postmark.

My dearest Girl,

I endeavour to make myself as patient as possible. Hunt amuses me very kindly—besides I have your ring on my finger and your flowers on the table. I shall not expect to see you yet because it would be so much pain to part with you again. When the Books you want came (for come) you shall have them. I am very well this afternoon. My dearest . . .

[Signature cut off.<sup>1</sup>]

departure of Brown for Scotland on the 7th of May 1820. Dilke notes that 'Brown let his house, as he was accustomed to do in the summer—and therefore Keats was obliged to remove'. Brown was starting for a second Scotch tour—alone this time, except so far as the voyage down the river to Gravesend was concerned. As regards the scheme of becoming Surgeon on board an Indiaman, see Letters 127 and 128. A correspondent, signing himself 'Y', addressed a letter about Keats to the editor of 'The Morning Chronicle', July 27, 1821, in which he stated—'He once said, that if he should live a few years, he would go over to South America, and write a Poem on Liberty, and now he lies in the land where liberty once flourished, and where it is regenerating.'

<sup>1</sup> The piece cut off the original letter is so small that nothing can well be wanting except the signature,—probably given to an autograph-collector. This letter was of course written after Keats's removal from Wentworth Place to Wesleyan Place, Kentish Town, which, according to the letter written by the poet to his sister on the 4th of May 1820, was to have been accomplished by the 6th. The rest of the letters to Fanny Brawne all appear to have been written at Kentish Town, either at Wesleyan Place where Keats lodged up to the 23rd of June, or at Hunt's house in Mortimer Terrace to which he seems to have moved on that day.—H.B.F.

1820

Letter 215

214. To FANNY BRAWNE. (May 1820.)

Address: Mr<sup>s</sup> Brawne

No postmark.

Tuesday Af<sup>tn</sup>.

My dearest Fanny,

For this Week past I have been employed in marking the most beautiful passages in Spenser,<sup>1</sup> intending it for you, and comforting myself in being somehow occupied to give you however small a pleasure. It has lightened my time very much. I am much better. God bless you.

Your affectionate

J. Keats

215. To CHARLES BROWN. (15 May 1820.)

My dear Brown,

You must not expect me to date my letter from such a place as this: you have heard the name; that is sufficient, except merely to tell you it is the 15th instant. You know I was very well in the smack; I have continued much the same, and am well enough to extract much more pleasure than pain out of the summer, even though I should get no better. I shall not say a word about the stanza you promised yourself through my medium, and will swear, at some future time, I promised. Let us hope I may send you more than one in my next. x x x x x x x

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> The book referred to was lost in Germany.—H.B.F.

215. 'It was his choice', says Brown (Houghton Papers), 'during my absence, to lodge at Kentish Town, that he might be near his friend, Leigh Hunt, in whose companionship he was ever happy. He went with me in the scotch smack as far as Gravesend. This was on the 7th of May. I never saw him afterwards. As evidence of his well being I had requested him to send me some new stanzas to his comic faery poem; for, since his illness, he had not dared the exertion of composing. At the end of eight days he wrote in good spirits. . . .' The fragment printed above is all that Brown gave of the letter 'in good spirits'. The pleasantry about not dating is characteristic enough as addressed to one punctilious in such matters.—H.B.F.

216. To FANNY BRAWNE. (May 1820.)

*No address or postmark.*

Tuesday Morn—

My dearest Girl,

I wrote a Letter for you yesterday expecting to have seen your mother. I shall be selfish enough to send it though I know it may give you a little pain, because I wish you to see how unhappy I am for love of you, and endeavour as much as I can to entice you to give up your whole heart to me whose whole existence hangs upon you. You could not step or move an eyelid but it would shoot to my heart—I am greedy of you. Do not think of any thing but me. Do not live as if I was not existing—Do not forget me—But have I any right to say you forget me? Perhaps you think of me all day. Have I any right to wish you to be unhappy for me? You would forgive me for wishing it, if you knew the extreme passion I have that you should love me—and for you to love me as I do you, you must think of no one but me, much less write that sentence. Yesterday and this morning I have been haunted with a sweet vision—I have seen you the whole time in your shepherdess dress. How my senses have ached at it! How my heart has been devoted to it! How my eyes have been full of Tears at it! I need I think a real Love is enough to occupy the widest heart—Your going to town alone, when I heard of it was a shock to me—yet I expected it—*promise me you will not for some time, till I get better.* Promise me this and fill the paper full of the most endearing names. If you cannot do so with good will, do my Love tell me—say what you think—confess if your heart is too much fasten'd on the world. Perhaps then I may see you at a greater distance, I may not be able to appropriate you so closely to myself. Were you to loose a favorite bird from the cage, how would your eyes ache after it as long as it was in sight; when out of sight you would recover a little. Perhaps if you would, if so it is, confess to me how many things are necessary to you besides me, I might be happier, by being less tantaliz'd. Well may you exclaim, how selfish, how

216. I do not find among the extant letters any one which I can regard as the particular letter referred to in the opening sentence. If Letter 220 were headed *Tuesday* and this *Wednesday*, that might well be the peccant document which appears to be missing.—H.B.F.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Othello', iv. ii. 68.

cruel, not to let me enjoy my youth! to wish me to be unhappy! You must be so if you love me—upon my Soul I can be contented with nothing else. If you could really what is call'd enjoy yourself at a Party—if you can smile in peoples faces, and wish them to admire you *now*, you never have nor ever will love me. I see *life* in nothing but the certainty of your Love—convince me of it my sweetest. If I am not somehow convinc'd I shall die of agony. If we love we must not live as other men and women do—I cannot brook the wolfbane<sup>1</sup> of fashion and foppery and tattle. You must be mine to die upon the rack if I want you. I do not pretend to say I have more feeling than my fellows—but I wish you seriously to look over my letters kind and unkind and consider whether the Person who wrote them can be able to endure much longer the agonies and uncertainties which you are so peculiarly made to create—My recovery of bodily health will be of no benefit to me if you are not all mine when I am well. For God's sake save me—or tell me my passion is of too awful a nature for you. Again God bless you

J. K.

No—my sweet Fanny—I am wrong. I do not want you to be unhappy—and yet I do, I must while there is so sweet a Beauty—my loveliest my darling! Good bye! I Kiss you—O the torments!

217. To JOHN TAYLOR. (*Sunday 11 June?*) 1820.

Address: John Taylor Esq<sup>re</sup> | Taylor & Hessey | Booksellers &c.  
| Fleet Street—| The first Bookseller on the left hand,  
from | St Pauls, past Bridge Street, Black-friars.

*No postmark.*

My dear Taylor,

In reading over the proof of St. Agnes' Eve since I left Fleet street I was struck with what appears to me an alteration in the 7<sup>th</sup> Stanza very much for the worse the passage I mean stands thus

“her maiden eyes incline  
Still on the floor, while many a sweeping train  
Pass by—”

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Ode on Melancholy', l. 2.



Twass originally written

“her maiden eyes divine  
Fix’d on the floor saw many a sweeping train  
Pass by—

My meaning is quite destroyed in the alteration. I do not use *train* for *concourse of passers by* but for ~~Skits~~ *Skirts* sweeping along the floor.

In the first Stanza my copy reads—2<sup>nd</sup> line

“bitter *chill* it was”

to avoid the echo cold in the next line.

ever yours sincerely  
John Keats

218. To CHARLES BROWN. (June 1820.)

*Address and postmark not recorded.*

My dear Brown,

I have only been to x x x's once since you left, when x x x x could not find your letters. Now this is bad of me. I should, in this instance, conquer the great aversion to breaking up my regular habits, which grows upon me more and more. True I have an excuse in the weather, which drives one from shelter to shelter in any little excursion. I have not heard from George. My book<sup>1</sup> is coming out with very low hopes, though not spirits on my part. This shall be my last trial; not succeeding, I shall try what I can do in the Apothecary line. When you hear from or see x x x x x it is probable you will hear some complaints against me, which this notice is not intended to forestall. The fact is I did behave badly; but it is to be attributed to my health, spirits, and the disadvantageous ground I stand on in society. I would go and accommodate matters, if I were not too weary of the world. I know that they are more happy and comfortable than I am; therefore why should I trouble myself about it? I foresee I shall know very few people in the course of a year or two. Men get such different<sup>2</sup> habits, that they become as oil and vinegar

218. This undated letter belongs to the time between the 7th of May 1820, when Brown left for Scotland and Keats went to Kentish Town, and the 23rd of June, when Keats wrote to his sister that he *had* heard from George.

<sup>1</sup> 'Lamia, Isabella, &c.'

<sup>2</sup> Brown and Milnes read *different*, Bodurtha and Pope *difficult*.

to one another. Thus far I have a consciousness of having been pretty dull and heavy, both in subject and phrase; I might add, enigmatical. I am in the wrong, and the world is in the right, I have no doubt. Fact is, I have had so many kindnesses done me by so many people, that I am cheveaux-de-frised with benefits, which I must jump over or break down. I met x x x in town<sup>1</sup> a few days ago, who invited me to supper to meet Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb, Haydon, and some more; I was too careful of my health to risk being out at night. Talking of that, I continue to improve slowly, but, I think, surely. All the talk at present x x x x x x x There is a famous exhibition in Pall Mall<sup>2</sup> of the old english portraits by Vandyck and Holbein, Sir Peter Lely and the great Sir Godfrey. Pleasant countenances predominate; so I will mention two or three unpleasant ones. There is James the first,—whose appearance would disgrace a “Society for the suppression of women”; so very squalid, and subdued to nothing he looks. Then, there is old Lord Burleigh, the high priest of economy, the political save-all, who has the appearance of a Pharisee just rebuffed by a gospel bon-mot. Then, there is George the second, very like an unintellectual Voltaire, troubled with the gout and a bad temper. Then, there is young Devereux, the favourite, with every appearance of as slang a boxer as any in the court; his face is cast in the mould of blackguardism with jockey-plaster. x x x x x I shall soon begin ~~with~~ upon *Lucy Vaughan Lloyd*.<sup>3</sup> I do not begin composition yet, being willing, in case of a relapse, to have nothing to reproach myself with. I hope the weather will give you the slip; let it show itself, and steal out of your company.<sup>4</sup> x x x x x When I have sent off this, I shall write another to some place about fifty miles in advance of you.

Good morning to you.

Your's ever sincerely,

John Keats.

<sup>1</sup> Crabb Robinson records an evening spent at Monkhouse's on June 21, 1820, when Lamb, Wordsworth, and Talfourd were present.

<sup>2</sup> At the British Institution in June 1820. The portrait of James I was said to be by Vandyke, that of George II by Robert Edge Pine, and that of Devereux by Zuccherò. The painter of Lord Burleigh's portrait is not given in the Catalogue of the Exhibition.

<sup>3</sup> The pen-name under which Keats projected to publish 'The Cap and Bells'. Brown put it in quotes, then cancelled them and underlined it.

<sup>4</sup> 'Much Ado about Nothing', III. iii. 63-4.

*From GEORGE KEATS to JOHN KEATS. Sunday 18 June 1820.*

*No address or postmark.*

Louisville June 18<sup>th</sup> 1820

My dear John

Where will our miseries end? so soon as the Thursday after I left London you were attacked with a dangerous illness, an hour after I left this for England my little Girl became so ill as to approach the Grave dragging our dear George after her. You are recovered (thank <God> I hear the bad and good news together) they are recovered, and yet I feel gloomy instead of grateful. Perhaps from the consideration that so short a time will serve to deprive me of every object that makes life pleasant. Brown says you are really recovered, that you eat, drink, sleep, and walk five miles without weariness, this is positive, and I believe you nearly recovered but your perfect recovery depends on the future. You must go to a more favorable climate, must be easy in your mind, the former depends on me the latter on yourself. My prospect of being able to send you 200£ very soon is pretty good, I have an offer for the Boat which I have accepted, but the party who lives at Natchez (near New Orleans 300 miles only) will not receive information that I have accepted his offer for some weeks since the Gentleman who was commissioned to make it has gone up the Country and not yet returned, the only chance against us is that the purchasing party may change his mind; this is improbable since he has already purchased one fifth and to my knowledge is very anxious to obtain mine, but it is not impossible. I will direct my Agent at New Orleans to send you 200£ instantly on receiving the proceeds of the sale, and should no unexpected delay occur it will arrive within 2 or 3 weeks of this letter. It shall be addressed to you at Abbey & Co's, the first of exchange directly from New Orleans, the second and third by way of New York and this place. I have no other means of raising anything like that Sum, scarcely a Man in the Town could borrow such a sum. I might suggest means of raising the money on this hope immediately but Brown being on the spot will advise what is best. Since your health requires it to Italy you must and shall go. Make your mind easy and place confidence in my success, I cannot ensure it, but I will deserve it. I have a consignment of goods to sell by commission, which helps me a little, if this parcel does well I shall have more. When I have received the price offered for the Boat I shall have been no loser by the purchase. This considering the alteration in times is doing wonders. George desires her love and thinks that if you were with us our nursing would soon bring you to rights, but I tell her you cannot be in better hands than Browns, she joins me in grateful thanks to him. I will write to him next post repeating what is important in this, lest one should miscarry. Our love to Fanny and Mr<sup>s</sup> W and Brothers. Yesterday's Post with Brown's letter brought us one from Henry Wylie acquainting us with the death of Mr<sup>s</sup> Miller, our love to Mary Miller if you should see her, George will write her in a few days. I will write again soon. I made up a packet to Haslam containing letters to Fanny, Mr Abbey and Mr<sup>s</sup> W. to go by private hand, the Gentleman has postponed his voyage. Take the utmost care of yourself my dear

John for the sake of your most affectionate and alarmed Brother and Sister.

I am  
Your very affectionate Brother  
George.

219. To FANNY KEATS. *Friday 23 June 1820.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbeys Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow

*Postmarks:* KENTISH T<sup>n</sup> and 26 JU 1820

Friday Morn—

My dear Fanny,

I had intended to delay seeing you till a Book which I am now publishing was out, expecting that to be the end of this week when I would have brought it to Walthamstow: on receiving your Letter of course I set myself to come to town, but was not able for just as I was setting out yesterday morning a slight spitting of blood came on which returned rather more copiously at night. I have slept well and they tell me there is nothing material to

219. This letter would seem to have been written the morning after the attack of blood-spitting to which it refers. If so, the attack in question had taken place, like the former attack, on a Thursday. The letter must have been delayed, for the postmark is as distinctly as possible that of the 26th of June 1820, which was a Monday. On the same day that Keats was writing to his sister, Friday the 23rd of June 1820, Mrs. Gisborne wrote thus in her private journal:—‘Yesterday evening we drank tea at M<sup>r</sup> Hunt’s; we found him ill, as he had been attacked with a bilious fever, soon after we last saw him, and was not yet recovered. His nephew was with him; he appears grave, and very attentive to his uncle, listening to all his words, in silence. M<sup>r</sup> Keats was introduced to us the same evening; he had lately been ill also, and spoke but little; the Endymion was not mentioned, this person might not be its author; but on observing his countenance and his eyes I persuaded myself that he was the very person. We talked of music, and of Italian and english singing; I mentioned that Farinelli had the art of taking breath imperceptibly, while he continued to hold one single note, alternately swelling out and diminishing the power of his voice like waves. Keats observed that this must in some degree be painful to the hearer, as when a diver descends into the hidden depths of the sea you feel an apprehension lest he may never rise again. These may not be his exact words as he spoke in a low tone.’ Probably the slight blood-spitting of the morning had made him careful; but to no effect. On the 28th of June Mrs. Gisborne writes:—‘Returning from our visit to Coleridge on Saturday last, we called in our way at M<sup>r</sup> Hunts and were grieved to hear from M<sup>r</sup>. Hunt that the nervous pain in his head was worse, and that M<sup>r</sup> Keats was also ill in the house; he had burst a blood vessel the very night after we had seen him, and in order to be well attended, he had been removed from his lodgings in the neighbourhood, to M<sup>r</sup> Hunt’s house.’ The ‘night after’ must mean the night of the same day—the 22nd; and probably Keats moved from Wesleyan Place to Mortimer Terrace on the 23rd of June 1820.

fear. I will send my Book soon with a Letter which I have had from George who is with his family quite well.

Your affectionate Brother

John—

220. To FANNY BRAWNE. *Wednesday* (5 July?) 1820.

*No address or postmark.*

Wednesday Mornng.

My dearest Girl,

I have been a walk this morning with a book in my hand, but as usual I have been occupied with nothing but you I wish I could say in an agreeable manner. I am tormented day and night. They talk of my going to Italy. 'Tis certain I shall never recover if I am to be so long separate from you yet with all this devotion to you I cannot persuade myself into any confidence of you. (Past experience connected with the fact of my long separation from you gives me agonies which are scarcely to be talked of.) When your mother comes I shall be very sudden and expert in asking her whether you have been to M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke's, for she might say no to make me easy. I am literally worn to death, which seems my only recourse. I cannot forget what has pass'd. What? nothing with a man of the world, but to me deathful. I will get rid of this as much as possible. When you were in the habit of flirting with Brown you would have left off, could your own heart have felt one half of one pang mine did. Brown is a good sort of Man—he did not know he was doing me to death by inches. I feel the effect of every one of those hours in my side now; and for that cause, though he has done me many services, though I know his love and friendship for me, though at this moment I should be without pence were it not for his assistance, I will never see or speak to him<sup>1</sup> until we are both old men, if we are to be. I will resent my heart having been made a football. You will call this madness. I have heard you say that it was not unpleasant

<sup>1</sup> This extreme bitterness of feeling must have supervened, one would think, on increased bodily disease; for the letter was clearly written after the parting of Keats and Brown at Gravesend, which took place on the 7th of May 1820, and on which occasion there is every reason to think that the friends were undivided in attachment. I imagine Keats would gladly have seen Brown within a week of this time had there been any opportunity.—H.B.F.

to wait a few years—you have amusements—your mind is away—you have not brooded over one idea as I have, and how should you? You are to me an object intensely desirable—the air I breathe in a room empty of you is unhealthy. I am not the same to you—no—you can wait—you have a thousand activities—you can be happy without me. Any party, any thing to fill up the day has been enough. How have you pass'd this month?<sup>1</sup> Who have you smil'd with? All this may seem savage in me. You do not feel as I do—you do not know what it is to love—one day you may—your time is not come. Ask yourself how many unhappy hours Keats has caused you in Loneliness. For myself I have been a Martyr the whole time, and for this reason I speak; the confession is forc'd from me by the torture. I appeal to you by the blood of that Christ you believe in: Do not write to me if you have done anything this month which it would have pained me to have seen. You may have altered—if you have not—if you still behave in dancing rooms and other societies as I have seen you—I do not want to live—if you have done so I wish this coming night may be my last. I cannot live without you, and not only you but *chaste you; virtuous you*. The Sun rises and sets, the day passes, and you follow the bent of your inclination to a certain extent—you have no conception of the quantity of miserable feeling that passes through me in a day.—Be serious! Love is not a plaything—and again do not write unless you can do it with a crystal conscience. I would sooner die for want of you than—

Yours for ever  
J. Keats.

221. To FANNY KEATS. *Wednesday 5 July 1820.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow

*Postmarks:* KENTISH T<sup>n</sup> and 6 JY 1820

Mortimer Terrace  
Wednesday

My dear Fanny,

I have had no return of the spitting of blood, and for

<sup>1</sup> This question might be taken to indicate the lapse of about a month from the time when Keats left the house at Hampstead next door to Miss Brawne's, where he probably knew her employments well enough from day to day; but I am inclined to think that a longer time had passed.—H.B.F.

221. Between the date of this letter and the probable date of the next,

two or three days have been getting a little stronger. I have no hopes of an entire reestablishment of my health under some months of patience. My Physician tells me I must contrive to pass the Winter in Italy. This is all very unfortunate for us—we have no recourse but patience, which I am now practicing better than ever I thought it possible for me. I have this moment received a Letter from Mr Brown, dated Dunvegan Castle, Island of Skye. He is very well in health and Spirits. My new publication has been out for some days and I have directed a Copy to be bound for you, which you will receive shortly. No one can regret Mr Hodgkinson's ill fortune: I must own illness has not made such a Saint of me as to prevent my rejoicing at his reverse. Keep yourself in as good hopes as possible; in case my illness should continue an unreasonable time many of my friends would I trust for my Sake do all in their power to console and amuse you, at the least word from me—You may depend upon it that in case my strength returns I will do all in my power to extricate you from the Abbies. Be above all things careful of your health which is the corner stone of all pleasure.

Your affectionate Brother  
John —

*From* BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON *to* KEATS.<sup>1</sup> (*July 1820.*)

*Address:* John Keats

*No postmark.*

My dear Keats,

I have been coming every day for months to see you, and determined this morning as I heard you were still ill or worse to walk over in spite of all pestering hindrances I regret my very dear Keats to find by your Landlady's account that you are very poorly I hope you have Darling's advice, on whose skill I have the greatest reliance—certainly I was as bad as any body could be, and I have recovered, therefore, I hope, indeed I have no doubt, you will ultimately get round again, if you attend strictly to yourself, & avoid cold & night

Mrs. Gisborne made the following entry in her journal: 'Wednesday 12 July. We drank tea at Mr Hunt's; I was much pained by the sight of poor Keats, under sentence of death from Dr Lamb. He never spoke and looks emaciated.' It was perhaps immediately upon this visit that Mr. Gisborne wrote to Shelley the communication which induced his letter to Keats dated the 27th of July 1820.—H.B.F.

<sup>1</sup> This note was written in Keats's lodgings in Kentish Town, probably a day or two before the 14th of July, on a piece of the same paper Keats was using—a different paper to that used by Haydon.

1820

Letter 222

air.—I wish you would write me a line to say how you really are.—I have been sitting for some little time in your Lodgings which are clean, airy, & quiet—I wish to God you were sitting with me—I am sorry to hear Hunt has been laid up too—take care of yourself my dear Keats—& believe me

ever most affectionately & sincerely

your Friend

B. R. Haydon

*From BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON to KEATS. Friday  
14 July 1820.*

*Address: John Keats Esq | Wesleyan Place | Kentish Town*

*No postmark.*

My dear Keats,

When I called the other morning, I did not know your Poems were out, or I should have read them before I came in order to tell you my opinion—I have done so since, and really cannot tell you how very highly I estimate them—they justify the assertions of all your Friends regarding your poetical powers. I can assure you, whatever you may do, you will not exceed my opinion of them. Have you done with Chapman's Homer? I want it very badly at this moment; will you let the bearer have it, as well as let me know how you are?

I am dear Keats

ever yours

July 14 1820.

B. R. Haydon

222. *To FANNY KEATS. Saturday 22 July 1820.*

*Address: Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow*

*Postmarks: HAMPSTEAD<sup>1</sup> and 22 JY 1820*

My dear Fanny,

I have been gaining Strength for some days: it would be well if I could at the same time say I <am> gaining hopes of a speedy recovery. My constitution has suffered very much for two or three years past, so as to be scar(c)ely able to make head against illness, which the natural activity and impatience of my Mind renders more dangerous. It will at all events be a very tedious affair, and you must expect to hear very little alteration of any sort in me for some time. You ought to have received a copy of my Book ten days ago I shall send another message to the Booksellers. One of the M<sup>r</sup> Wylies will be here to day or to morrow when I will ask him to send you George's Letter. Writing the smallest note is so an<n>oying to me that I

<sup>1</sup> The postmark is that of Hampstead; but Keats was certainly still at Kentish Town, whence the letter must have been carried to Hampstead and posted.



have waited till I shall see him. M<sup>r</sup> Hunt does every thing in his power to make the time pass as agreeably with me as possible. I read the greatest part of the day, and generally take two half hour walks a day up and down the terrace which is very much pester'd with cries, ballad singers, and street music. We have been so unfortunate for so long a time, every event has been of so depressing a nature that I must persuade myself to think some change will take place in the aspect of our affairs. I shall be upon the look out for a trump card.

Your affectionate  
Brother, John —

223. To FANNY BRAWNE. (July 1820.)

Address: M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne—

No postmark.

My dearest Fanny,

My head is puzzled this morning, and I scarce know what I shall say though I am full of a hundred things. 'Tis certain I would rather be writing to you this morning, notwithstanding the alloy of grief in such an occupation, than enjoy any other pleasure, with health to boot, unconnected with you. Upon my soul I have loved you to the extreme. I wish you could know the Tenderness with which I continually brood over your different aspects of countenance, action and dress. I see you come down in the morning: I see you meet me at the Window—I see every thing over again eternally that I ever have seen. If I get on the pleasant clue I live in a sort of happy misery, if on the unpleasant 'tis miserable misery. You complain of my illtreating you in word thought and deed—I am sorry,—at times I feel bitterly sorry that I ever made you unhappy—my excuse is that those words have been wrung from me by the sha(r)pness of my feelings. At all events and in any case I have been wrong; could I believe that I did it without any cause, I should be the most sincere of Penitents. I could give way to my repentant feelings now, I could recant all my suspicions, I could mingle with you heart and Soul though absent, were it not for some parts of your Letters. Do you suppose it possible I could ever leave you? You know what I think of myself and what of you. You know that I should feel how much it

was my loss and how little yours. My friends laugh at you! I know some of them—when I know them all I shall never think of them again as friends or even acquaintance. My friends have behaved well to me in every instance but one, and there they have become tattlers, and inquisitors into my conduct: spying upon a secret I would rather die than share it with any body's confidence. For this I cannot wish them well, I care not to see any of them again. If I am the Theme, I will not be the Friend of idle Gossips. Good gods what a shame it is our Loves should be so put into the microscope of a Coterie. Their laughs should not affect you (I may perhaps give you reasons some day for these laughs, for I suspect a few people to hate me well enough, *for reasons I know of*, who have pretended a great friendship for me) when in competition with one, who if he never should see you again would make you the Saint of his memory. These Laughers, who do not like you, who envy you for your Beauty, who would have God-bless'd me from you for ever: who were plying me with discouragements with respect to you eternally. People are revengeful—do not mind them—do nothing but love me—if I knew that for certain life and health will in such event be a heaven, and death itself will be less painful. I long to believe in immortality.<sup>1</sup> I shall never be able to bid you an entire farewell. If I am destined to be happy with you here—how short is the longest Life. I wish to believe in immortality—I wish to live with you for ever. Do not let my name ever pass between you and those laughers, if I have no other merit than the great Love for you, that were sufficient to keep me sacred and unmentioned in such Society. If I have been cruel and unjust I swear my love has ever been greater than my cruelty which last(s) but a minute whereas my Love come what will shall last for ever. If concession to me has hurt your Pride, god knows I have had little pride in my heart when thinking of you. Your name never passes my Lips—do not let mine pass yours—Those People do not like me. After ~~writing~~ reading my Letter you even then wish to see me. I am strong enough to walk over—but I dare not. I shall feel so much pain in parting with you again. My dearest love, I am affraid to see you, I am strong but not strong enough to see you. Will my arm be ever round you again.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 98, p. 245.

And if so shall I be obliged to leave you again. My sweet Love! I am happy whilst I believe your first Letter. Let me be but certain that you are mine heart and soul, and I could die more happily than I could otherwise live. If you think me cruel—if you think I have sleighted you—do muse it over again and see into my heart. My Love to you is 'true as truth's simplicity and simpler than the infancy of truth'<sup>1</sup> as I think I once said before How could I slight you? How threaten to leave you? not in the spirit of a Threat to you—no—but in the spirit of Wretchedness in myself. My fairest, my delicious, my angel Fanny! do not believe me such a vulgar fellow. I will be as patient in illness and as believing in Love as I am able.

Yours for ever my dearest  
John Keats.

224. To FANNY BRAWNE. (August 1820?)

No address or postmark.

I do not write this till the last  
that no eye may catch it.<sup>2</sup>

My dearest Girl,

I wish you could invent some means to make me at all happy without you. Every hour I am more and more

<sup>1</sup> No apology is necessary for quoting here the relative passage from the play so much read by Keats, 'Troilus and Cressida', III. ii. 165-77:

O that I thought it could be in a woman—  
As, if it can, I will presume in you—  
To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love;  
To keep her constancy in plight and youth,  
Outliving beauty's outward, with a mind  
That doth renew swifter than blood decays!  
Or that persuasion could but thus convince me,  
That my integrity and truth to you  
Might be affronted with the match and weight  
Of such a winnow'd purity in love;  
How were I then uplifted! but, alas!  
I am as true as truth's simplicity  
And simpler than the infancy of truth.

Cf. the reference to Cressida in Letter 177. Dr. Caroline Spurgeon shows that ll. 174 and 176-7 were underlined by Keats in his Shakespeare.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to mean that he wrote the letter to the end, and then filled in the words 'My dearest Girl', left out lest any one coming near him should chance to see them. These words are written more heavily than the beginning of the letter, and indicate a state of pen corresponding with that shown by the words 'God bless you' at the end. Probably the tone of this letter may have had something to do with the return of Keats to Wentworth Place instead of Well Walk when the letter-opening affair at Hunt's (Letter 226) induced him to insist on leaving Kentish Town. It seems likely that

concentrated in you; every thing else tastes like chaff in my Mouth. I feel it almost impossible to go to Italy—the fact is I cannot leave you, and shall never taste one minute's content until it pleases chance to let me live with you for good. But I will not go on at this rate. A person in health as you are can have no conception of the horrors that nerves and a temper like mine go through. What Island do your friends propose retiring to? I should be happy to go with you there alone, but in company I should object to it; the backbitings and jealousies of new colonists who have nothing else to amuse themselves, is unbearable. Mr Dilke came to see me yesterday, and gave me a very great deal more pain than pleasure. I shall never be able any more to endure to *(for the)* society of any of those who used to meet at Elm Cottage and Wentworth Place. The last two years taste like brass upon my Palate.<sup>1</sup> If I cannot live with you I will live alone. I do not think my health will improve much while I am separated from you. For all this I am averse to seeing you—I cannot bear flashes of light and return into my glooms again. I am not so unhappy now as I should be if I had seen you yesterday. To be happy with you seems such an impossibility! it requires a luckier Star than mine! it will never be. I enclose a passage from one of your Letters which I want you to alter a little—I want (if you will have it so) the matter express'd less coldly to me. If my health would bear it, I could write a Poem<sup>2</sup> which I have in my head, which would be a consolation for people in such a situation as mine. I would show some one in Love as I am, with a person living in such Liberty as you do. Shakspeare always sums up matters in the most sovereign manner. Hamlet's heart was full of such Misery as mine is when he said to Ophelia "Go to a Nunnery, go, go!"<sup>3</sup> Indeed I should like

this was the last letter Keats ever wrote to Fanny Brawne; for Mr. Severn told me that his friend was absolutely unable to write to her either on the voyage or in Italy. To her mother he wrote from Naples the letter given here numbered 240, adding a few pathetic words of farewell to Fanny herself.—H.B.F.

<sup>1</sup> Compare this striking phrase with Hyperion's experience (Book I, lines 188–9):

Instead of sweets, his ample palate took  
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick: . . .

<sup>2</sup> There is much that is analogous between the tone of this letter and that of the 'Ode to Fanny' ('Physician Nature! let my spirit blood!').

<sup>3</sup> 'Hamlet', iii. i. 124–58.

to give up the matter at once—I should like to die. I am sickened at the brute world which you are smiling with. I hate men and women more. I see nothing but thorns for the future—wherever I may be next winter in Italy or nowhere Brown will be living near you with his indecencies—I see no prospect of any rest. Suppose me in Rome—well, I should there see you as in a magic glass going to and from town at all hours,———— I wish you could infuse a little confidence in<sup>1</sup> human nature into my heart. I cannot muster any—the world is too brutal for me—I am glad there is such a thing as the grave—I am sure I shall never have any rest till I get there. At any rate I will indulge myself by never seeing any more Dilke or Brown or any of their Friends. I wish I was either in your arms full of faith or that a Thunder bolt would strike me.

God bless you.

J. K—

225. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. (*August 1820.*)

*No address or postmark.*

Mrs Brawne's Next door to Brown's  
Wentworth Place  
Hampstead

My dear Haydon,

I am much better this morning than I was when I wrote the note: that is my hopes and spirits are better which are generally at a very low ebb from such a protracted illness—I shall be here for a little time and at home all and every day. A Journey to Italy is recommended me, which I have resolved upon and am beginning to prepare for. Hoping to see you shortly

I remain

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

<sup>1</sup> Keats wrote *of* and overwrote it *in*.

225. This may be one of the letters he wrote on the 14th of August: apparently the note he refers to is missing. I assume that Letter 229 replies to a message received later on the same day. Writing after Keats's death, Haydon says—'The last time I ever saw him was at Hampstead, lying in a white bed with a book, hectic and on his back, irritable at his weakness and wounded at the way he had been used. He seemed to be going out of life with a contempt for the world and no hopes of the other. I told him to be calm, but he muttered that if he did not soon get better he would destroy himself. I tried to reason against such violence, but it was no use; he grew angry, and I went away deeply affected.'

226. To FANNY KEATS. *Monday 14 Aug. 1820.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 14 AU 1820

Wentworth Place

My dear Fanny,

'Tis a long time since I received your last. An accident of an unpleasant nature occur<sup>(r)</sup>ed at M<sup>r</sup> Hunt's and prevented me from answering you, that is to say made me nervous. That you may not suppose it worse I will mention that some one of M<sup>r</sup> Hunt's household opened a Letter of mine—upon which I immediately left Mortimer Terrace, with the intention of taking to M<sup>rs</sup> Bentley's again; fortunately I am not in so lone a situation, but am staying a short time with M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne who lives in the House which was M<sup>rs</sup> Dilke's. I am excessively nervous: a person I am not quite used to entering the room half choaks me. 'Tis not yet Consumption I believe, but it would be were I to remain in this climate all the Winter: so I am thinking of either voyageing or travelling to Italy. Yesterday I received an invitation from M<sup>r</sup> Shelley, a Gentleman residing at Pisa, to spend the Winter with him: if I go I must be away in a Month or even less. I am glad you like the Poems, you must hope with me that time and health will pro<sup>(duce)</sup> you some more. This is the first morning I have been able to sit to the paper and have many Letters to write if I can manage them. God bless you my dear Sister.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

226. The beginning of this letter does not quite explain itself, as the incident of the opened letter at Hunt's had occurred as recently as Thursday the 10th of August, and had not been known by Keats till Saturday the 12th. This is quite clear from the following entry in Mrs. Gisborne's journal: 'Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Aug. Yesterday M<sup>rs</sup> Gisborne and Emma dined with us; M<sup>rs</sup> Hunt came in to tea; she called to apologise for herself and M<sup>r</sup>. Hunt, for not having kept their appointment on the Saturday before; they were prevented by an unpleasant circumstance that happened to Keats. While we <were> there on Thursday a note was brought for him after he had retired to his room to repose himself; M<sup>rs</sup> Hunt being occupied with the child desired her upper servant to take it to him, and thought no more about it. On Friday the servant left her, and on Saturday Thornton produced this note open (which contained not a word of the least consequence), telling his mother that the servant had given it to him before she left the house with injunctions not to shew it to his mother till the following day. Poor Keats was affected by this inconceivable circumstance beyond what can be imagined; he wept for several hours, and resolved, notwithstanding Hunt's entreaties, to leave the house; he went to Hampstead that same evening.'

*Percy Bysshe Shelley to Keats]*

*July*

From PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY to KEATS. *Thursday 27 July 1820.*

Address: John Keats Esq<sup>r</sup>. | (to the care of Leigh Hunt Esq<sup>r</sup>.) | Examiner Office | Catharine Street | Strand | London | Angleterre

Postmarks: LIVORNO and FPO 10 AU 1820

Pisa—July 27 1820.

My dear Keats

I hear with great pain the dangerous accident that you have undergone, & Mr Gisborne who gives me the account of it, adds, that you continue to wear a consumptive appearance. This consumption is a disease particularly fond of people who write such good verses as you have done, and with the assistance of an English winter it can often indulge its selection;—I do not think that young & aimiable poets are at all bound to gratify its taste; they have entered into no bond with the Muses to that effect. But seriously (for I am joking on what I am very anxious about) I think you would do well to pass the winter after so (trem)endous an accident in Italy, & (if you think it as necessary as I do) so long as you could (find) Pisa or its neighbourhood agre(e)able to you, M<sup>rs</sup> Shelley unites with myself in urging the request, that you would take up your residence with us.—You might come by sea to Leghorn, (France is not worth seeing, & the sea air is particularly good for weak lungs) which is within a few miles of us. You ought at all events to see Italy, & your health which I suggest as a motive, might be an excuse to you.—I spare declamation about the statues & the paintings & the ruins—& what is a greater piece of forbearance—about the mountains the streams & the fields, the colours of the sky, & the sky itself—

I have lately read your *Endymion* again & ever with a new sense of the treasures of poetry it contains, ~~but~~ though treasures poured forth with indistinct profusion. This, people in general will not endure, & that is the cause of the comparatively few copies which have been sold.—I feel persuaded that you are capable of the greatest things, so you but will.

I always tell Ollier to send you Copies of my books.—“Prometheus Unbound” I imagine you will receive nearly at the same time with this letter. The Cenci I hope you have already ~~seen~~ received—it was studiously composed in a different style “below the *good* how far! but far above the *great*”.<sup>1</sup> In poetry I have sought to avoid system & mannerism; I wish those who excel me in genius, ~~had~~ would pursue the same plan—

Whether you remain in England, or journey to Italy,—believe that you carry with you my anxious wishes for your health happiness & success, wherever you are or whatever you undertake—& that I am

Yours sincerely  
P. B. Shelley<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ‘Beneath the Good’, &c.—Thomas Gray, ‘The Progress of Poesy’, iii.

3, 17.

<sup>2</sup> On the 23rd of August 1820 Leigh Hunt wrote to Shelley from Mortimer Terrace, Kentish Town:—‘Keats, who is better, is sensible of your kindness, and has sent you a letter and a fine piece of poetry by the Gisbornes. He is advised to go to Rome, but will call on you in the spring.’

1820

Letter 227

227. To PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. *Wednesday 16 Aug. 1820.*

*Address: P. B. Shelley Esq<sup>re</sup>.*

*No postmark.*

Hampstead August 16<sup>th</sup>

My dear Shelley,

I am very much gratified that you, in a foreign country, and with a mind almost overoccupied, should write to me in the strain of the Letter beside me. If I do not take advantage of your invitation it will be prevented by a circumstance I have very much at heart to prophesy. There is no doubt that an english winter would put an end to me, and do so in a lingering hateful manner, therefore I must either voyage or journey to Italy as a soldier marches up to a battery. My nerves at present are the worst part of me, yet they feel soothed when I think that come what extreme may, I shall not be destined to remain in one spot long enough to take a hatred of any four particular bed-posts. I am glad you take any pleasure in my poor Poem<sup>1</sup>;—which I would willingly take the trouble to unwrite, if possible, did I care so much as I have done about Reputation. I received a copy of the Cenci, as from yourself from Hunt. There is only one part of it I am judge of; the Poetry, and dramatic effect, which by many spirits now a days is considered the mammon. A modern work it is said must have a purpose, which may be the God—*an artist* must serve Mammon—he must have “self concentration” selfishness perhaps. You I am sure will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity and be more of an artist, and ‘load every rift’ of your

On the 11th of November 1820 Shelley wrote to Marianne Hunt, ‘Where is Keats now? I am anxiously expecting him in Italy, when I shall take care to bestow every possible attention on him. I consider his a most valuable life, and I am deeply interested in his safety. I intend to be the physician both of his body and his soul, to keep the one warm, and to teach the other Greek and Spanish. I am aware, indeed, in part, that I am nourishing a rival who will far surpass me; and this is an additional motive, and will be an added pleasure.

‘We are at this moment removing from the Bagni to Pisa, for the Serchio has broken its banks, and all the country about is under water. An old friend and fellow-townsmen of mine, Captain Medwin, is on a visit to us at present, and we anxiously expect Keats, to whom I would write if I knew where to address.’

227. In the ‘Shelley Memorials’, 1859, p. 142, this letter is dated ‘August 10th, 1820’; the holograph has now come to light and the correct date is given above.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Endymion’.



subject with ore.<sup>1</sup> The thought of such discipline must fall like cold chains upon you, who perhaps never sat with your wings furl'd for six Months together. And is not this extraordinary talk for the writer of *Endymion*! whose mind was like a pack of scattered cards—I am pick'd up and sorted to a pip. My Imagination is a Monastery and I am its Monk—you must explain my metaph<sup>es</sup> to yourself. I am in expectation of Prometheus every day. Could I have my own wish for its interest effected you would have it still in manuscript—or be but now putting an end to the second act. I remember you advising me not to publish my first-blights, on Hampstead heath—I am returning advice upon your hands. Most of the Poems in the volume I send you<sup>2</sup> have been written above two years, and would never have been publish'd but from a hope of gain; so you see I am inclined enough to take your advice now. I must express once more my deep sense of your Kindness, adding my sincere thanks and respects for M<sup>rs</sup> Shelley. In the hope of soon seeing you I remain

most sincerely yours,  
John Keats—

228. To JOHN TAYLOR. *Monday 14 Aug. 1820.*

*Address:* John Taylor Esq<sup>re</sup> | Taylor and Hessey | Booksellers  
Fleet Street.

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 14 AU 1820

Wentworth Place  
Satv. Morn.

My dear Taylor,

My Chest is in so nervous a State, that any thing extra such as speaking to an unaccustomed Person or writing a Note half suffocates me. This Journey to Italy wakes me at daylight every morning and haunts me horribly. I shall endeavour to go though it be with the sensation

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Spenser, 'Faerie Queene', II. vii. 28, l. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 'Lamia, Isabella, &c.', a copy of which, belonging to Hunt, was found doubled back in the drowned Shelley's pocket, and was cast by Hunt upon the burning relics of his friend.

228. Though Keats dated this letter Saturday, which was the 12th of August, I think the postmark, which is that of Monday, the 14th, must be relied upon. Mrs. Gisborne states that he 'went to Hampstead that same evening', i.e. the 12th, and therefore he could not have written from Wentworth Place on the morning of that day. He was in a thoroughly nervous state, so much so that he wrote a second note to Taylor the same day, having forgotten to mention the passage to Leghorn.

of marching up against a Battery.<sup>1</sup> The first spep (<for step>) towards it is to know the expense of a Journey and a years residence: which if you will ascertain for me and let me know early you will greatly serve me. I have more to say but must desist for every line I write encreases the tightness of the Chest, and I have many more to do. I am convinced that this sort of thing does not continue for nothing—If you can come with any of our friends do.

Your sincere friend

John Keats—

229. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. <14 Aug. 1820.>

*No address or postmark.*

My dear Haydon,

I am sorry to be obliged to try your patience a few more days when you will have the Book sent from Town. I am glad to hear you are in progress with another Picture.<sup>2</sup> Go on I am affraid I shall pop off just when I (<for my>) mind is able to run alone—

Your sincere friend

John Keats

230. To LEIGH HUNT. <August 1820.>

*Address: Leigh Hunt Esq<sup>re</sup>*

*Sent by hand.*

(An Amyntas)

Wentworth Place

My dear Hunt,

You will be glad to hear I am going to delay a little time at Mr<sup>s</sup> Brawnes. I hope to see you whenever you can get time for I feel really attach'd to you for your many sympathies with me, and patience at my luns. Will you send

<sup>1</sup> This characteristic expression, which occurs in almost the same words in the foregoing letter to Shelley (No. 227), may be compared with a somewhat similar one in Letter 143, p. 370, where Keats writes to Fanny Brawne that he can 'no more use soothing words' to her than if he were 'engaged in a charge of Cavalry'.

<sup>2</sup> The picture referred to is recorded by Frederic Wordsworth Haydon to have been 'The Raising of Lazarus' now in the Tate Gallery.

230. This may well be one of the 'many more' letters he told Taylor he had 'to do' in Letter 228. The heading 'An Amyntas' refers to Hunt's 'Amyntas, A Tale of the Woods; from the Italian of Torquato Tasso', published in July 1820 and dedicated to Keats. 'Lucy Vaughan Lloyd' was the pen-name under which he intended to publish 'The Cap and Bells'.

by the Bearess Lucy Vaughn Lloyd. My best rem<sup>es</sup> to Mr<sup>s</sup> Hunt.

Your affectionate friend  
John Keats

From LEIGH HUNT to KEATS.<sup>1</sup> (August 1820.)

Address: John Keats Esq<sup>re</sup> | Mr<sup>s</sup> Brawn's | Wentworth Place

No postmark.

Mortimer Terrace.

Giovanni mio,

I shall see you this afternoon, & most probably every day. You judge rightly when you think I shall be glad at your putting up awhile where you are, instead of that solitary place. There are humanities in the house; & if wisdom loves to live with children round her knees (the tax-gatherer apart), sick wisdom, I think, should love to live with arms about its waist. I need not say how you gratify me by the impulse which led you to write a particular sentence in your letter, for you must have seen by this time how much I am attached to yourself.

I am indicating at as dull a rate as a battered finger-post in wet weather. Not that I am ill: for I am very well altogether.

Your affectionate friend,  
Leigh Hunt.

231. To JOHN TAYLOR. Monday 14 Aug. 1820.

Address: John Taylor Esq<sup>re</sup> | Taylor & Hessey | Booksellers | Fleet Street

Postmark: 14 AU 1820

Wentworth Place.

My dear Taylor—

I do not think I mentioned any thing of a Passage to Leghorn by Sea. Will you join that to your enquiries, and, if you can, give a peep at the Birth if the Vessel is in our river?

Your sincere friend  
John Keats  
over

P.S. Some how a Copy of Chapman's Homer, lent to me by Haydon, has disappeared from my Lodgings—it has quite flown I am affraid, and Haydon urges the return of it so that I must get one at Longman's and send it to Lisson grove—or you must—or as I have given you a job

<sup>1</sup> This letter was first printed in 'Papers of a Critic', vol. i, pp. 9-10, and was evidently perfect when Sir Charles Dilke copied it. From the holograph in the Keats Museum, Hampstead, the words after 'I think' and up to the word 'particular' are now missing.

on the River—ask Mistessey.<sup>1</sup> I had written a Note to this effect to Hessey some time since but crumpled it up in hopes that the Book might come to Light. This morning Haydon has sent another messenger. The Copy was in good condition, with the head. Damn all thieves! Tell Woodhouse I have not lost his Blackwood.

Taylor endorsed this letter as follows:—

'Inclosed in this Letter I received a Testamentary Paper in John Keats's Handwriting without Date on which I have indorsed a Memorandum to this Effect for the purpose of identifying it, & for better Security it is hereunto annexed

John Taylor.'

22 Sep 1820

[*Testamentary Paper*<sup>2</sup>]

In case of my death this scrap of Paper may be servic(e)-able in your possession.

All my estate real and personal consists in the hopes of the sale of books publish'd or unpublish'd. Now I wish *Brown* and you to be the first paid Creditors—the rest is in nubibus—but in case it should shower pay my Taylor the few pounds I owe him.

My Chest of Books divide among my friends.<sup>3</sup>

The endorsement on the Testamentary Paper runs thus:—

'N.B. On the 14<sup>th</sup> August or the 15<sup>th</sup> 1820 I received this paper which is in John Keats's Handwriting inclosed in the annexed letter which came by the 3<sup>dy</sup> Post

22 Sept 1820

John Taylor'

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hessey.

<sup>2</sup> First printed, without names, in Hone's 'Table Book' (1828), col. 430, in a letter to the Editor signed 'O.Z.' which says: 'This paper was intended by him to operate as his last will and testament, but the sages of Doctors' Commons refused to receive it as such, for reasons which to a lawyer would be perfectly satisfactory, however the rest of the world might deem them deficient in cogency. . . . Although too late to afford him any satisfaction or comfort, it did "shower" at last; and that, too, from a source which, in its general aspect, bears all the gloominess of a cloud, without any of its refreshing or fertilizing anticipations—I mean the Court of Chancery. This unexpected "shower" was sufficiently copious to enable the fulfilment of all the wishes expressed in the above note. His friends have therefore the gratification of knowing that no pecuniary loss has been (or need have been) sustained, by any one of those with whom he was connected, either by friendship or otherwise.'

<sup>3</sup> That this wish was carried out very thoroughly is clear from the following passage in a letter of George Keats to C. W. Dilke dated Louisville, 20th of April 1825: 'Since it has fallen on me to pay my Brother's debts I should in Justice have some books or other relics he may have left behind him, my conduct has been liberally censured, I have been industriously made

232. To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. (*August?*)  
1820.

Address: B. R. Haydon Esq

*No postmark.*

My dear Haydon;

I think I am recovering a little, which you should have heard of before if it was not very irksome to me to write

acquainted with demands against the estate but not a single volume, Picture, bust, Cast—is reserved for me, who I have no hesitation in saying am more nearly allied to poor John in feeling as I am more closely connected in Blood than any other in the whole circle of his Friendships. . . . Those effects in the possession of Friends who value them as having been once John's are most heartily welcome to them, I however hope some trifles may be collected for me so that I be not left entirely relickless!

The Shakespeare folio of 1808, containing his manuscript notes and the Sonnet on sitting down to read 'King Lear' once again, was in Mrs. Lindon's possession up to the time of her death; and the Shakespeare's Poems containing the 'Bright Star' sonnet was similarly guarded by Severn. Both became the property of Sir Charles Dilke, and are now in the Dilke Collection at Hampstead with other of his Keats relics. These include a folio Livy with the inscription 'B. Bailey, Magdalen Hall, Oxon, presents this volume to his friend John Keats, July 1818'; a much damaged copy of Bacon's 'Advancement of Learning', possessed by Keats when young, and containing many manuscript notes by Hazlitt; Lemprière's Classical Dictionary formerly Keats's but without his autograph; an Ovid of 1806 with his autograph; the Milton which he annotated and gave to Mrs. Dilke; and the Beaumont and Fletcher volumes given to Keats by his brother George. These are three volumes out of a set of four containing the dramatic works of Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher. Volume ii has the inscription 'Geo. Keats to his affectionate brother John'; and in volume iv are the holograph poems 'Bards of Passion and of Mirth' and 'Spirit here that reignest'. The volumes accompanied Brown to New Zealand, as did the annotated copy of Burton's 'Anatomy', volume ii only, which is also in the Dilke Collection. They were sent to Sir Charles Dilke by Brown's son, Major Charles Brown of Taranaki.

Now and again books formerly owned by Keats fall into the hands of collectors; but it is not often that they are to be had. Some sixty years ago a copy of Lemprière's Classical Dictionary bearing his autograph was acquired for a trifle by one who did not value it much, and who is now dead. Where the book is I know not. It would seem, however, that he must have had two copies in his time. In the Buxton Forman collection, besides the little Dante and Hunt's 'Foliage' given by Keats to Fanny Brawne, and therefore not left in the Chest, was a beautiful folio which probably was from the Chest. It is of the third edition of Selden's 'Titles of Honour' (1672), has the autograph 'John Keats 1819' on the title-page, and more interesting, the commencement of a manuscript index. On a blank leaf at the beginning he has made a complete set of capitals, duly spaced out for the entries to be added; but only two entries were made. Keats's 'Auctores Mythographi Latini', one volume quarto, was sent by Charles Brown to Benjamin Bailey in July 1823. His copies of Jackson's 'Shakespeare's Genius Justified', 1819, and Hazlitt's 'Characters of Shakespeare's Plays', 1817, are now in Harvard College Library. His seven-volume Shakespeare, described by Dr. Caroline F. E. Spurgeon in 'Keats's Shakespeare' (Oxford University Press, 1928) was formerly in the collection of the late George Armour of Princeton.

the shortest note. I am glad you like my book. At some future time I shall re borrow your Homer.<sup>1</sup>

Yours ever  
John Keats.

233. To CHARLES BROWN. (Monday 14 Aug. 1820.)

*Address and postmark not recorded.*

My dear Brown,

You may not have heard from x x x x or x x x x, or in any way, that an attack of spitting of blood, and all its weakening consequences, has prevented me from writing for so long a time. I have matter now for a very long letter, but not news; so I must cut every thing short. I shall make some confession, which you will be the only person, for many reasons, I shall trust with. A winter in England would, I have not a doubt, kill me; so I have resolved to go to Italy, either by sea or land. Not that I have any great hopes of that,—for, I think, there is a core of disease in me not easy to pull out x x x x x x x x x x x x.<sup>2</sup> If I should die x x x x x I shall be obliged to set off in less than a month. Do not, my dear Brown, tease yourself about me. You must fill up your time as well as you can, and as happily. You must think of my faults<sup>3</sup> as lightly as you can. When I have health I will bring up the long arrears of letters I owe you. x x x x x x My book has had good success among literary people, and, I believe, has a moderate sale. I have seen very few people we know. x x x has visited me more than any one. I would go to x x x x x and make some inquiries after you, if I could with any bearable sensation; but a person I am not quite used to causes an oppression on my chest. Last week I received a letter from Shelley, at Pisa, of a very kind nature, asking me to pass the winter with him. Hunt has behaved very kindly to me. You shall hear from me again shortly.

Your affectionate friend,

John Keats.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Haydon's letter of the 14th of July 1820, p. 499, and Letters 228 and 230.

<sup>2</sup> Brown notes, 'The omitted passage contained the secret. He went to Italy in pursuance of his physician's urgent advice.'

<sup>3</sup> Brown notes, 'Sixteen years have not changed my opinion. I thought then, and I think now, ~~that~~ he had no fault. On the faulty side he was scarcely human.'

*John Aitken to John Keats]*

*August*

*From JOHN AITKEN to JOHN KEATS, 17 Aug. 1820.*

*Address and Postmark not preserved.*

East Lothian Bank  
Dunbar 17<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup> 1820

Sir,

One, so enthusiastically fond as you are, of the early poets, and poetry of your country, can pardon enthusiasm in another, whether it be directed to those old worthies, who have made us what we are,—or towards our bright con(s)tellation of contemporary talent, which shall never put to shame immortal verse.—If I should express what I feel, of the rank which I consider you to hold among your illustrious compeers, I might perhaps be suspected of an intention to flatter, than which, nothing is more distant from my nature.—It is enough for me to testify my most earnest disapprobation, of the treatment you have experienced, and to express my unfeigned sorrow, that, a Scotch publication<sup>1</sup> should have borne away the bell, in such manifest baseness of conduct.—I am a Scotsman, and proud of my of my (*sic*) country—and proud, too, of many parts of that magazine, which has always been the vehicle of much unjustifiable abuse, but some that are (c)onnected with it, know well, how much, by every means in my power, I have endeavoured to soften its illiberality—to make it more worthy of them and more useful to the world.—But these things are not the main object of this letter.—My design in writing you is to bear evidence of my real interest for your welfare, which I learn by last Indicator,<sup>2</sup> is not what your friends would wish it to be.—I have watched over your dawning genius as warmly as if you had been my brother, and I hailed the appearance of your late interesting publication, with as much real gladness, as if it had freed me from all the sorrows which bad luck has hung about me.—I guessed that all was not well with you—and that I heard the parting beauty of the Swan's adieu in your numbers; but like every thing which gives us pain, I hoped that I was mistaken.—Would that it were in my power to yield you one real feeling of pleasure,—that aught within the reach of my influence could be welcome to you,—that I were a brother or a bosom friend to you, that by participation, any of your cares might be lessened.—But, alas, you will think that I am placed in a cold inhospitable clime where kind-hearts, and sunshine and loveliness and sympathy are equally rare—and how can I assure you that such is not the case. I may attempt to describe all the enjoyments which surround me, with partial language and which probably might have the effect of bringing you here—but how much would it mortify me if I had disappointed you.—But still I must endeavour to bring you to Scotland—although a land which you cannot love.—I must tell you that I am a young man; and and (*sic*) that a younger, amiable sister, is my housekeeper; and that within these islands there is not a spot better calculated to renovate a weakened frame.—Will you be persuaded to make the experiment?—I will meet you with open arms and with a kinder heart than beats between us; and if soothing affection, real sterling, Scottish kindness, and hospitality, can have any

<sup>1</sup> i.e. 'Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine', August 1818, III. xvii. 519-24, 'Cockney School of Poetry', no. iv.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Indicator', xliii-xliv, 337-52, August 2 and 9, 1820.

effect on your state of health you shall soon return happier and better if anything can make you so.—Nor shall your studies be interrupted.—My Library is select and extensive, and I can command numbers of others.—I have upwards of ⟨a⟩ thousand volumes—amo⟨ng⟩ which are the best productions of your cotemporaries—and many choice morceaux of the days that are gone.—Need I say more?—but more I cannot say than this that there is nothing selfish in my request.—It is prompted as much by the amiable qualities of your heart, which are so abundantly apparent in your productions as by the e⟨min⟩ence which you have attained—and may yet attain by your talents. In short I love you—(as you ~~will~~ must of necessity do me)—for yourself alone.—I may add ~~that~~ if you wish it you can be unknown to any one, as an author—and my house is large enough to afford you any accommodation.—You can live as a hermit when you wish it—and something very different when your inclination desires it.—

Between London & Leith, there is now, pr the Smacks, such princely convenience, that you will feel yourself perfectly at home in one of them.—The expense is but trifling—and the rapidity of their sailing is such that within three or four days after your leaving London you may count on feeling my warm shake of the hand in Dunbar.—There is the Mail too, and another excellent Coach, but during this excellent weather, by sea is by far the pleasantest.—If, by any of the Land conveyances, you pass through our ancient Town—and you will find me on the watch, as impatient to meet with you as if you were a young Lady.—I trust you will write me, and that your letter shall not, at least, state decisively that you will *not* come; as I have almost persuaded myself that you will in earnest visit me.—And now I am forced to conclude; assuring you that with real truth and sincerity I am

⟨Y⟩our real welwisher

J. Aitken

234. To CHARLES BROWN. ⟨August 1820.<sup>1</sup>⟩

*Address and postmark not recorded.*

My dear Brown,

x x x x x I ought to be off at the end of this week, as the cold winds begin to blow towards evening;—but I

<sup>1</sup> In his 'Life of John Keats' Brown says this letter was written 'a few days after that of August 14' (no. 233). He also states that 'the commencement is a continuation of the secret in his former letter, ending with a request that I would accompany him to Italy'.

234. Keats left Hampstead on his journey to Italy on Wednesday the 13th of September 1820. In the copy of Leigh Hunt's 'Literary Pocket-book' for 1819, which he left in the possession of Miss Brawne, she wrote under the 8th of September, 'Mr. Keats left Hampstead'. The explanation of this entry is that it was made under the second Wednesday in September 1819 to correspond with the second Wednesday in September 1820, which fell on the 13th.



will wait till I have your answer to this. I am to be introduced, before I set out, to a D<sup>r</sup> Clarke, a physician settled at Rome, who promises to befriend me in every way at Rome. The sale of my book is very slow, though it has been very highly rated. One of the causes, I understand from different quarters, of the unpopularity of this new book, and the others also, is the offence the ladies take at me. On thinking that matter over, I am certain that I have said nothing in a spirit to displease any woman I would care to please: but still there is a tendency to class women in my books with roses and sweetmeats,—they never see themselves dominant.<sup>1</sup> If ever I come to publish “Lucy Vaughan Lloyd”,<sup>2</sup> there will be some delicate picking for squeamish stomachs. I will say no more, but, waiting in anxiety for your answer, doff my hat, and make a purse as long as I can.

Your affectionate friend,  
John Keats.

From RICHARD ABBEY to KEATS. *Wednesday 23 Aug. 1820.*  
*No address or postmark.*

Pancrass Lane Aug 23, 1820

Mr John Keats  
Dear Sir

I have yours of Sunday and am exceedingly grieved at the contents—You know that it was very much against my will that you lent your money to George—In my settlement with him Mr Hodgkinson omitted a 50£ bill which he had drawn from America & not then due, so that he got this 50£ more than I knew of at the time—

Bad debts for the last two years have cut down the profits of our business to nothing, so that I can scarcely take out enough for my private expence—It is therefore not in my power to lend you any thing—I am

Dear Sir  
Yrs—  
Rich<sup>d</sup> Abbey

When you are able to call I shall be glad to see you, as I should not like to see you want “maintenance for the day”

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letter 100, p. 269. Brown in a note in his ‘Life of John Keats’ comments thus,—‘On what grounds can this opinion rest? Is not “Isabella” dominant to an extreme, in affection and in heroism? Are not his other poetic women mentally dominant, only in a minor degree? As for what he says respecting his poem by the supposed “Lucy Vaughan Lloyd”, there is nothing in the fragment he has left, nothing in the intended construction of the story, (for I knew all, and was to assist him in the machinery of one part,) but to the honour of women. Lord Byron, really popular among women, reduced them, to the offence of some men, to “roses and sweetmeats.”’

<sup>2</sup> i.e. ‘The Cap and Bells’, cf. Letter 218, p. 493.

235. To FANNY KEATS. *Wednesday 23 Aug. 1820.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup> | Walthamstow—

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 23 AU 1820

Wentworth Place Wednesday Morning

My dear Fanny,

It will give me great Pleasure to see you here, if you can contrive it; though I confess I should have written instead of calling upon you before I set out on my journey, from the wish of avoiding unpleasant partings. Meantime I will just notice some parts of your Letter. The Seal-breaking business is overblown. I think no more of it. A few days ago I wrote to M<sup>r</sup> Brown, asking him to befriend me with his company to Rome.<sup>1</sup> His answer is not yet come, and I do not know when it will, not being certain how far he may be from the Post Office to which my communication is addressed. Let us hope he will go with me. George certainly ought to have written to you: his troubles, anxieties and fatigues are not quite a sufficient excuse. In the course of time you will be sure to find that this neglect, is not forgetfulness.<sup>2</sup> I am sorry to hear you

<sup>1</sup> In the letters to Brown, as he copied them, there is no such request; it seems probable that in copying Brown omitted it intentionally and that it is covered by the crosses at the beginning of letter 234.

<sup>2</sup> That George Keats was not unmindful of his sister there is evidence in a letter from him to her, a copy of which I have found among my father's papers. This letter was begun at Louisville on the 25th of May 1820 and not despatched until after the 6th of January 1821, when the following explanation was added:—

'I wrote the enclosed for a private opportunity of which I was disappointed. I have now another. You have now my dear Fanny another niece, she was born on the 18th of December. See how fast I am becoming an old man your sister and child are both well. I am informed you feel disappointed at not hearing from me, the date of this will show you, you were not forgotten, nor will you ever be forgotten altho' you may not hear from me very frequently, my letter could only inform if we are well or ill, with politics you cannot be interested, what then must make up my epistles when the chances of the posts and the necessary distance of time between writing each letter will make a regular correspondence or interchange of ideas so difficult if not impossible. I should be more anxious to keep up a frequent communication by letter, if I did not one day expect to give you assurances of my affection in Person. Your entire leisure may make this appear a mere evasion, that a letter is easily written, but you will find it otherwise when you may have constant and perhaps important occupation. I have by me copies of letters of immense length built on nothing and written without trouble, but now my mind after a certain stretch will revert to my daily avocation, and writing letters instead of being as formerly a pleasure is now become a task. Under these feelings I procrastinate untill it seems almost useless to write; after having delayed writing six months another delay of a month seems nothing. I don't pretend to say that this

have been so ill and in such low spirits. Now you are better, keep so. Do not suffer your Mind to dwell on unpleasant reflections—that sort of thing has been the destruction of my health. Nothing is so bad as want of health—it makes one envy Scavengers and Cinder-sifters. There are enough real distresses and evils in wait for every one to try the most vigorous health. Not that I would say yours are not real—but they are such as to tempt you to employ your imagination on them, rather than endeavour to dismiss them entirely. Do not diet your mind with grief, it destroys the constitution; but let your chief care be of your health, and with that you will meet with your share of Pleasure in the world—do not doubt it. If I return well from Italy I will turn over a new leaf for you. I have been improving lately, and have very good hopes of ‘turning a Neuk’<sup>1</sup> and cheating the Consumption. I am not well enough to write to George myself—Mr Haslam will do it for me, to whom I shall write to day, desiring him to mention as gently as possible your complaint. I am my dear Fanny

Your affectionate Brother  
John.

236. To WILLIAM HASLAM. *Wednesday 23 August 1820.*

*Address:* Mr Haslam | Frampton & Co. | Leadenhall Street

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 23 AU 1820

Wentworth Place  
Wednesday—

My dear Haslam,

I have been at Mr<sup>s</sup> Brawne’s above a fortnight for a reason or by an accident I will explain when I am more fit for such things. The purport of the present not(e) is to tell you that if I can manage it I certainly intend going speedily to Rome. I have written to Abbey<sup>2</sup> for some Money which he promised to lend me in case George did not remit part of the loan from me. I have written to

is sufficient excuse for not writing, but you will see that my silence is not a want of affection, and that I am still altho lazy

Your very affectionate Brother

George.

I hope to have time to write to John in this packet. Your Sisters love.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Burns, ‘To Miss Ferrier’, l. 15.

<sup>2</sup> From Abbey’s reply, see p. 516, it appears that Keats had written to him on Sunday, 20 August.

Brown to ask him to accompany me;<sup>1</sup> and in fact am all but on the Road as the Physician tells me an english winter would do for me. Now will you let George and M<sup>rs</sup> Wylie know all this, and there will be so much anxiety taken off my Mind. Mention in your Letter to George that Fanny complains sadly of not hearing from him. I could say much more than this half sheet would hold, but the oppression I have at the Chest will not suffer my Pen to be long-winded. My Compt<sup>s</sup> to M<sup>rs</sup> H. who I hope is well.

Your sincere friend  
John Keats—

P.S. I have read this note over and think it goes rather snappish—you will believe I did not intend it. Goodbye

237. To FANNY KEATS. *Monday 11 Sept. 1820.*

*Address:* Miss Keats | R<sup>d</sup> Abbeys Esq | Walthamstow

*Postmarks:* HAMPSTEAD and 12 o'clock SP 12 1820 N<sup>n</sup> and 4 o'clock SP 12 1820 EV

Monday Morn

My dear Fanny

In the hope of entirely re-establishing my health I shall leave England for Italy this week and, of course I shall not be able to see you before my departure. It is not illness that prevents me from writing but as I am recommended to avoid every sort of fatigue I have accepted the assistance of a friend, who I have desired to write to you when I am gone and to communicate any intelligence she may hear of me. I am as well as I can expect and feel very impatient to get on board as the sea air is expected to be of great benefit to me. My present intention is to stay some time at Naples and then to proceed to Rome where I shall find several friends or at least several acquaintances. At any rate it will be a relief to quit this cold, wet, uncertain climate. I am not very fond of living in cities but there will be too much to amuse me, as soon as I am well enough to go out, to make me feel dull. I have received your parcel and intend to take it with me. You shall hear from me as often as possible, if I feel too tired to write myself I shall

<sup>1</sup> See Letter 234, p. 517, note 1.

237. This letter, including the signature, is entirely in the handwriting of Fanny Brawne.

have some friend to do it for me. I have not yet heard from George nor can I expect to receive any letters from him before I leave

Your affectionate brother  
John

From RICHARD WOODHOUSE to KEATS. *Saturday 16 Sept. 1820.*

*No address or postmark.*

My dear Keats,

Upon subjects like those in this letter, it is to me always more pleasant to write than to speak.—It gave me much pleasure to learn from Taylor that you are leaving us tolerably easy as to Money matters:—the more so, as, from particular circumstances, my own finances have had, and for the next six months or so will have, considerable drains upon them; which would make it not very convenient to me *just now* to render you assistance in that way.—But when I am a little recruited, which will I hope be about the time I have above mentioned, if you should have any wants of that nature, it would give me the greatest satisfaction to answer your draft; & you would of course, to prevent any disappointments, give me as much previous notice as you could,—I am sure you would not needlessly call upon me:—and, with that conviction, I should be despicable in my own eyes, if, with the means, I wanted the will to assist you.—What is the value of Pelf after the supply of one's own wants?—Of none to me. And there is no one who would be more welcome than yourself to share my little Superfluities.—

God bless you!—Take care of yourself,—if it be only for your friends' sake. Above all, keep your mind at ease. There are many who take more than a brotherly Interest in your welfare—There is certainly

——“one, whose hand will never scant  
From his poor store of fruits all *thou* canst want.”—<sup>1</sup>  
And he is,

Yours very sincerely  
& affectionately,  
Rich<sup>d</sup> Woodhouse.

Kings Bench Walk Temple.

Saty. night. 16 Sep<sup>r</sup> 1820.—

238. To ————— (*September 1820.*)

The passport arrived before we started. I dont think I shall be long ill. God bless you—farewell.

John Keats

<sup>1</sup> See Letter 98, p. 257.

238. The scrap of paper with these few words written upon it bears no date, address, or other indication as to what point of his journey Keats had

239. To CHARLES BROWN. *Saturday 30 Sept. 1820.*

*Address:* Mr Charles Brown | Wentworth Place | Hampstead | Middx.

*No postmark.*

Saturday Sept<sup>r</sup> 28<sup>1</sup>  
Maria Crowther  
off Yarmouth isle of wight.

My dear Brown,

The time has not yet come for a pleasant Letter from me. I have delayed writing to you from time to time because I felt how impossible it was to enliven you with one heartening hope of my recovery; this morning in bed the matter struck me in a different manner; I thought I would write "while I was in some liking"<sup>2</sup> or I might become too ill to write at all, and then if the desire to have written should become strong it would be a great affliction to me. I have many more Letters to write and I bless my stars that I have begun, for time seems to press,—this may be my best<sup>3</sup> opportunity. We are in a calm and I am easy enough this morning. If my spirits seem too low you may in some degree impute it to our having been at sea a fortnight without making any way. I was very disappointed at not meeting you at bedhampton, and am very provoked at the thought of you being at Chichester to day.<sup>4</sup> I should have delighted in setting off for London for the sensation merely—for what should I do there? I could not leave my lungs or stomach or other worse things behind me. I wish to write on subjects that

reached when he wrote it, or for whom it was destined. He had gone to Taylor's from Hampstead and went on board the 130-ton brig 'Maria Crowther', Captain Thomas Walsh, in the London Docks on Sunday the 17th of September, the ship sailed at 7 a.m. She anchored off Gravesend, as was customary for outward bound ships, which were there visited by the Customs clearing officer and where all dues were collected and the river pilot landed. The second lady passenger, Miss Cotterell, having come aboard, the brig left finally on the 18th. During the night of the 17th–18th a smack from Dundee with Charles Brown on board had been anchored within speaking distance of the 'Maria Crowther'.

<sup>1</sup> The 28th was a Thursday.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. '1 Henry IV', III. iii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Brown copied this as *last*, but Keats wrote *best* quite clearly.

<sup>4</sup> The 'Maria Crowther' put into Portsmouth owing to contrary winds on the 28th of September. C. W. Dilke says, 'when Keats landed and went to my sisters <Mr<sup>s</sup> Snook's> at Bedhampton—Brown was staying at my father's at Chichester'.

will not agitate me much—there is one I must mention and have done with it. Even if my body would recover of itself, this would prevent it. The very thing which I want to live most for will be a great occasion of my death. I cannot help it. Who can help it? Were I in health it would make me ill, and how can I bear it in my state? I dare say you will be able to guess on what subject I am harping—you know what was my greatest pain during the first part of my illness at your house. I wish for death every day and night to deliver me from these pains, and then I wish death away, for death would destroy even those pains which are better than nothing. Land and Sea, weakness and decline are great separators, but death is the great divorcer for ever. When the pang of this thought has passed through my mind, I may say the bitterness of death is passed. I often wish for you that you might flatter me with the best. I think without my mentioning it for my sake you would be a friend to Miss Brawne when I am dead. You think she has many faults—but, for my sake, think she has not one— —if there is any thing you can do for her by word or deed I know you will do it. I am in a state at present in which woman merely as woman can have not more power over me than stocks and stones, and yet the difference of my sensations with respect to Miss Brawne and my Sister is amazing. The one seems to absorb the other to a degree incredible. I seldom think of my Brother and Sister—in america. The thought of leaving Miss Brawne is beyond every thing horrible—the sense of darkness coming over me—I eternally see her figure eternally vanishing. Some of the phrases she was in the habit of using during my last nursing at Wentworth place ring in my ears. Is there another Life? Shall I awake and find all this a dream? There must be we cannot be created for this sort of suffering. The receiving this letter is to be one of yours. I will say nothing about our friendship or rather yours to me more than that as you deserve to escape you will never be so unhappy as I am. I should think of—you in my last moments. I shall endeavour to write to Miss Brawne if possible to day. A sudden stop to my life in the middle of one of these Letters would be no bad thing for it keeps one in a sort of fever awhile. Though fatigued with a Letter longer than any I have written for a long while it

would be better to go on for ever than awake to a sense of contrary winds. We expect to put into Portland roads to night. The Capt<sup>n</sup> the Crew and the Pasengers are all illtemper'd and weary. I shall write to dilke. I feel as if I was closing my last letter to you.<sup>1</sup>

My dear Brown

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

240. To MRS. BRAWNE. Tuesday 24 Oct. 1820.

Address: M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne | Wentworth Place | Hampstead Middx | England

Postmark: F.P.O. 11 NO 1820

Oct<sup>r</sup> 24 Naples Harbour—  
care Giovanni

My dear M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne,

A few words will tell you what sort of a Passage we had, and what situation we are in, and few they must be on account of the Quarantine, our Letters being liable to be opened for the purpose of fumigation at the Health Office.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following paragraphs from Lord Houghton's 'Life' &c. serve to connect this letter with the next:

'A violent storm in the Bay of Biscay lasted for thirty hours, and exposed the voyagers to considerable danger. "What awful music!" cried Severn, as the waves raged against the vessel. "Yes," said Keats, as a sudden lurch inundated the cabin, "Water parted from the sea".\* After the tempest had subsided, Keats was reading the description of the storm in "Don Juan", and cast the book on the floor in a transport of indignation. "How horrible an example of human nature", he cried, "is this man, who has no pleasure left him but to gloat over and jeer, at the most awful incidents of life. Oh! this is a paltry originality, which consists in making solemn things gay, and gay things solemn, and yet it will fascinate thousands, by the very diabolical outrage of their sympathies. Byron's perverted education makes him assume to feel, and try to impart to others, those depraved sensations which the want of any education excites in many."

'The invalid's sufferings increased during the latter part of the voyage and a ten-days' miserable quarantine at Naples. But, when once fairly landed and in comfortable quarters, his spirits appeared somewhat to revive, and the glorious scenery to bring back, at moments, his old sense of delight. But these transitory gleams, which the hopeful heart of Severn caught and stored up, were in truth only remarkable as contrasted with the chronic gloom that overcame all things, even his love. What other words can tell the story like his own? What fiction could colour more deeply this picture of all that is most precious in existence becoming most painful and destructive? What profounder pathos can the world of tragedy exhibit than this expression of all that is good and great in nature writhing impotent in the grasp of an implacable destiny?'

\* A popular ballad by Dr. Thomas Augustine Arne (1710-1778).

<sup>2</sup> The original letter, in the Dilke Collection, is very much discoloured, perhaps through the operations of the Health Office.



We have to remain in the vessel ten days and are, at present shut in a tier of ships. The sea air has been beneficial to me about to as great an extent as squally weather and bad accommodations and provisions has done harm—So I am about as I was—Give my Love to Fanny and tell her, if I were well there is enough in this Port of Naples to fill a quire of Paper—but it looks like a dream—every man who can row his boat and walk and talk seems a different being from myself. I do not feel in the world. It has been unfortunate for me that one of the Passengers is a young Lady in a Consumption—her imprudence has vexed me very much—the knowledge of her complaint—the flushings in her face, all her bad symptoms have preyed upon me—they would have done so had I been in good health.<sup>1</sup> Severn now is a very good fellow but his nerves are too strong to be hurt by other peoples illnesses—I remember poor Rice wore me in the same way in the isle of Wight<sup>2</sup>—I shall feel a load off me when the Lady vanishes out of my sight. It is impossible to describe exactly in what state of health I am—at this moment I am suffering from indigestion very much, which makes such stuff of this Letter. I would always wish you to think me a little worse than I really am; not being of a sanguine disposition I am likely to succeed. If I do not recover your regret will be softened if I do your pleasure will be doubled—I dare not fix my Mind upon Fanny, I have not dared to think of her. The only comfort I have had that way has been in thinking for hours together of having the knife she gave me put in a silver-case—the hair in a Locket—and the Pocket Book in a gold net—Show her this. I dare say no more—Yet you must not believe I am so ill as this Letter may look, for if ever there was a person born without the faculty of hoping I am he. Severn is writing to Haslam, and I have just asked him to request Haslam to send you his account of my health. O what an account I could give you of the Bay of Naples if I could once more feel myself a Citizen of this world—I feel a spirit in my Brain would lay it forth pleasantly—O what a misery it is to have an intellect in splints! My Love again

<sup>1</sup> Before this letter was published Medwin quoted a few lines from this part of it, altered to suit his purpose, in his 'Life of Shelley', 1847, ii. 96; 1913 ed. H.B.F., pp. 299, 300.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 355, 363.

to Fanny—tell Toots<sup>1</sup> I wish I could pitch her a basket of grapes—and tell Sam the fellows catch here with a line a little fish much like an anchovy, pull them up fast. Remember me to M<sup>rs</sup> and M<sup>r</sup> Dilke—mention to Brown that I wrote him a letter at Port(s)mouth which I did not send and am in doubt if he ever will see it.

my dear M<sup>rs</sup> Brawne

Yours sincerely and affectionate

John Keats—

Good bye Fanny! God bless you

241. To CHARLES BROWN. *Wednesday 1 Nov. 1820.*

*Address and postmark not recorded.*

Naples. Wednesday first in November.

My dear Brown,

Yesterday we were let out of Quarantine, during which my health suffered more from bad air and a stifled cabin than it had done the whole voyage. The fresh air revived me a little, and I hope I am well enough this morning to write to you a short calm letter;—if that can be called one, in which I am afraid to speak of what I would the faintest dwell upon. As I have gone thus far into it, I must go on a little;—perhaps it may relieve the load of WRETCHEDNESS which presses upon me. The persuasion that I shall see her no more will kill me. I cannot q—<sup>2</sup> My dear Brown, I should have had her when I was in health, and I should have remained well. I can bear to die—I cannot bear to leave her. Oh, God! God! God! Every thing I have in my trunks that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear. The silk lining she put in my travelling cap scalds my head. My imagination is horribly vivid about her—I see her—I hear her. There is nothing in the world of sufficient interest to divert me from her a moment. This was the case when I was in England; I cannot recollect, without shuddering, the time that I was prisoner at Hunt's, and used to keep my eyes fixed on Hampstead all day. Then there was a good hope of seeing her again—Now!—O that

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Brawne, Fanny's younger sister, I presume; but I have no certain knowledge that she bore that pet-name: 'Sam' was certainly her brother; his portrait is to be seen in the Keats Museum, Hampstead.

<sup>2</sup> Brown makes the following note upon this passage:—

'He could not go on with this sentence, nor even write the word "quit",—as I suppose. The word WRETCHEDNESS above he himself wrote in large characters.'

I could be buried near where she lives! I am afraid to write to her—to receive a letter from her—to see her hand writing would break my heart—even to hear of her any how, to see her name written would be more than I can bear. My dear Brown, what am I to do? Where can I look for consolation or ease? If I had any chance of recovery, this passion would kill me. Indeed through the whole of my illness, both at your house and at Kentish Town, this fever has never ceased wearing me out. When you write to me, which you will do immediately, write to Rome (*poste restante*)—if she is well and happy, put a mark thus +,—if—— Remember me to all. I will endeavour to bear my miseries patiently. A person in my state of health should not have such miseries to bear. Write a short note to my sister, saying you have heard from me. Severn is very well. If I were in better health I should urge your coming to Rome. I fear there is no one can give me any comfort. Is there any news of George? O, that something fortunate had ever happened to me or my brothers!—then I might hope,—but despair is forced upon me as a habit. My dear Brown, for my sake, be her advocate for ever. I cannot say a word about Naples; I do not feel at all concerned in the thousand novelties around me. I am afraid to write to her. I should like her to know that I do not forget her. Oh, Brown, I have coals of fire in my breast. It surprised me that the human heart is capable of containing and bearing so much misery. Was I born for this end? God bless her, and her mother, and my sister, and George, and his wife, and you, and all!

Your ever affectionate friend,  
John Keats.

Thursday (2 November). I was a day too early for the courier. He sets out now. I have been more calm to-day, though in a half dread of not continuing so. I said nothing of my health; I know nothing of it; you will hear Severn's account from x x x x x. I must leave off. You bring my thoughts too near to ———.

God bless you!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Houghton adds here:—

'Little things, that at other times might have been well passed over, now struck his susceptible imagination with intense disgust. He could not bear to go to the opera, on account of the sentinels who stood constantly on the

stage, and whom he at first took for parts of the scenic effect. "We will go at once to Rome," he said; "I know my end approaches, and the continual visible tyranny of this government prevents me from having any peace of mind. I could not lie quietly here. I will not leave even my bones in the midst of this despotism."

In an undated holograph letter of Shelley's to Claire Clairmont there is the following postscript:—

'Keats is very ill at Naples—I have written to him to ask him to come to Pisa, without however inviting him into our own house. We are not rich enough for that sort of thing. Poor fellow!'

The paper on which this postscript is written was originally destined to go to Keats, for it bears the cancelled words—

'My dear Keats,

I learn this moment ~~that~~ you are at Naples and that . . .'

Severn told me of a letter 'of touching interest', received by Keats from Shelley in Italy—a letter which was stolen from Severn in later years and which I have never succeeded in tracing.

Lord Houghton says:—

'He had received at Naples a most kind letter from Mr Shelley, anxiously inquiring about his health, offering him advice as to the adaptation of diet to the climate, and concluding with an urgent invitation to Pisa, where he could ensure him every comfort and attention. But for one circumstance, it is unfortunate that this offer was not accepted, as it might have spared at least some annoyances to the sufferer, and much painful responsibility, extreme anxiety, and unrelieved distress to his friend.'

241. Lord Houghton records that, on arriving at Rome, Keats delivered a letter of introduction to Dr. (afterwards Sir James) Clark. 'The circumstances of the young patient were such as to ensure compassion from any person of feeling, and perhaps sympathy and attention from superior minds. But the attention he here received was that of all the skill and knowledge that science could confer, and the sympathy was of the kind which discharges the weight of obligation for gratuitous service, and substitutes affection for benevolence and gratitude. All that wise solicitude and delicate thoughtfulness could do to light up the dark passages of mortal sickness and soothe the pillow of the forlorn stranger was done, and, if that was little, the effort was not the less. In the history of most professional men this incident might be remarkable, but it is an ordinary sample of the daily life of this distinguished physician, who seems to have felt it a moral duty to make his own scientific eminence the measure of his devotion to the relief and solace of all men of intellectual pursuits, and to have applied his beneficence the most effectually to those whose nervous susceptibility renders them the least fit to endure that physical suffering to which, above all men, they are constantly exposed.

'The only other introduction Keats had with him, was from Sir T. Lawrence to Canova, but the time was gone by when even Art could please, and his shattered nerves refused to convey to his intelligence the impressions by which a few months before he would have been rapt into ecstasy. Dr. Clark procured Keats a lodging in the Piazza di Spagna, opposite to his own abode; it was in the first house on your right hand as you ascend the steps of the "Trinità del Monte". Rome, at that time, was far from affording the comforts to the stranger that are now so abundant, and the violent Italian superstitions respecting the infection of all dangerous disease, rendered the circumstances of an invalid most harassing and painful. Suspicion tracked him as he grew worse, and countenances darkened round as the world narrowed about him; ill-will increased just when sympathy was most wanted, and the essential loneliness of the death-bed was increased by the alienation of all other men; the last grasp of the swimmer for life was ruthlessly cast off by his stronger comrade, and the affections that are wont to survive the body were crushed down in one common dissolution. At least

*George Keats to John Keats]*

*November*

*From GEORGE KEATS to JOHN KEATS. Wednesday, 8 Nov.  
1820.*

Louisville Nov 8th 1820

My dear John,

Again, and Again I must send bad news. I cannot yet find a purchaser for the Boat, and have received no intelligence of the man who offered the price I accepted, it was only 500 dollars more than the sum she cleared me last year. If I were to lower the price 500 dollars it would be as difficult of Sale. I hope to be able to send you money soon untill I do I shall be fast approaching the blue devil temperament. Your inevitable distresses are subject of conversation to us almost every day, we wish you were here untill we could launch you into the world again with present means and future prospects. Had the Mill been finished within *a year* of the time agreed upon in my contract with the Builders you should not have wanted money now, it was not finished within 21 mos, such a dissatisfaction driving me to every shift to live, rent and servant hire unpaid, will weigh heavy upon me some time. The present is all I fear, by next Autumn I hope to live in a house and on ground of my own, with returns at least three times my expenses, my gain now is double my expenses, without receiving for my services which will be well paid as soon as my experience in the Business will justify my asking an allowance; our firm is "Geo Keats & Co.; my partners are the principal Iron founders in the western Country. I receive and pay all. They keep the engine in order, without expense to the Comp<sup>y</sup>. Almost every day I am in the woods superintending the felling of Trees and cutting saw-logs, and the ground tinged with leaves reminds me of your little prospect of breathing a milder air this winter, such thoughts frequently render our fireside melancholy, if you fail us we lose the most material object for which we now toil and save, in fact the goal to which we stretch is a future residence in England, and a communion once more with those who understand us and love us, you are the most prominent in our minds as one of those, your distress is ours. Here we are not understood if our conduct will bear two constructions, the worst is put upon it. Altho we have connections we have no genuine we have no genuine (*sic*) exercise (*sic*) of kindly feelings but between ourselves: we are happy in being most comfortable at home, where I arrive and am received with pleasure to every meal. We are not yet hacknied, careless man and Wife, we have no quarrels now altho' we had many before marriage, we are both major domo, and yet we are neither major domo, we live so quietly people hardly know what to make of us. All we want at ~~plea~~ present is your health and happiness. Marriage might do you good, I will not offer any fusty remarks, but assure you that had I to chuse again I would marry and suffer as I have done, to common observers no marriage could have been more unpromising than ours. Give our love to Fanny, Mrs Wylie, Henry, Charles, we are su(r)prised we have no news from them. Give our best rem<sup>s</sup> to the Brawns Reynolds, Dilk(e)'s, Brown, Rice & Haslam. Haslam does not appear to have received the letter in which I informed him that the articles Kent proposes to send are from this desolation Keats was saved by the love and care of M<sup>r</sup> Severn and D<sup>r</sup> Clark.'

totally unsaleable here, where almost every man is pressed for market money. If we meet a safe opportunity for England we will send Miss Brawn an india Crape dress or merino shawl or something scarce with you, but cheap with us, she has our thanks for her kindness during your illness. Our little live thing as George calls her is in good health and offers bread and butter and Apple-toottie to Uncle John every day. If Brooks, Stationer, Oxford St. has not started for this Country before your book is out, we shall expect it by him. I sent Reynolds Waverl(e)y, has he received it? To see your hand writing will be a great comfort to your Affectionate Brother & Sister.

I am your Brother George.  
signed. Georgiana Emily Keats.

242. To CHARLES BROWN. Thursday 30 Nov. 1820.

*Address and postmark not recorded.*

Rome. 30 November 1820.

My dear Brown,

'Tis the most difficult thing in the world ~~for~~ to me to write a letter. My stomach continues so bad, that I feel it worse on opening any book,—yet I am much better than I was in Quarantine. Then I am afraid to encounter the proing and conning of any thing interesting to me in England. I have an habitual feeling of my real life having past, and that I am leading a posthumous existence. God knows how it would have been—but it appears to me—however, I will not speak of that subject. I must have been at Bedhampton nearly at the time you were writing to me from Chichester—how unfortunate—and to pass on the river too! There was my star predominant!<sup>1</sup> I cannot answer any thing in your letter, which followed me from Naples to Rome, because I am afraid to look it over again. I am so weak (in mind) that I cannot bear the sight of any hand writing of a friend I love so much as I do you. Yet I ride the little horse,—and, at my worst, even in Quarantine, summoned up more puns, in a sort of desperation, in one week than in any year of my life. There is one thought enough to kill me—I have been well, healthy, alert &c, walking with her—and now—the knowledge of contrast, feeling for light and shade, all that information (primitive sense) necessary for a poem are great enemies to the recovery of the stomach. There, you rogue, I put you to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'All's Well that Ends Well', i. i. 213-14, and 'The Winter's Tale', i. ii. 201-2.

the torture,—but you must bring your philosophy to bear—as I do mine, really—or how should I be able to live? Dr. Clarke is very attentive to me; he says, there is very little the matter with my lungs, but my stomach, he says, is very bad. I am well disappointed in hearing good news from George,—for it runs in my head we shall all die young. I have not written to x x x x x yet, which he must think very neglectful; being anxious to send him a good account of my health, I have delayed it from week to week. If I recover, I will do all in my power to correct the mistakes made during sickness; and if I should not, all my faults will be forgiven. I shall write to x x x tomorrow, or next day. I will write to x x x x x in the middle of next week. Severn is very well, though he leads so dull a life with me. Remember me to all friends, and tell x x x x I should not have left London without taking leave of him, but from being so low in body and mind. Write to George as soon as you receive this, and tell him how I am, as far as you can guess;—and also a note to my sister—who walks about my imagination like a ghost—she is so like Tom. I can scarcely bid you good bye even in a letter. I always made an awkward bow.<sup>1</sup>

God bless you!

John Keats.

Of this letter Lord Houghton says:—‘I have now to give the last letter of Keats in my possession; probably the last he wrote. One phrase in the commencement of it became frequent with him; he would continually ask Dr. Clark, “When will this posthumous life of mine come to an end?” Yet when this was written, hope was evidently not extinguished within him . . .’

The following letter, though it bears no address, appears to be a reply to one from Brown, written three weeks later than the above:—

Louisville March 3rd 1821

Sir,

I am obliged for your's of the Decr 21st informing me that my Brother is in Rome, and that he is better. The coldness of your letter explains itself; I hope John is not impressed with the same sentiments, it may be an amiable resentment on your part and you are at liberty to cherish it; whatever errors you may fall into thro' kindness for my Brother however injurious to me, are easily forgiven. I might have reasonably hoped a longer seige of doubts would be necessary to destroy your good opinion of me. In many letters of distant and late dates to John, to you and to Haslam unanswered, I have explained my prospects, my situation, I have a firm faith that John has every dependance on my honour and affection, and altho' the chances have gone against me, my disappointments having been just as numerous as my risques, I am still above water and hope soon to be able to releive him.

I once more thank you most fervently for your kindness to John, and am Sir

Your ob<sup>t</sup> Hbl Serv.

George Keats.

1820

[Charles Brown to Keats

From CHARLES BROWN to KEATS. Thursday 21 Dec. 1820.

Address: To | John Keats Esq<sup>r</sup> | Poste Restante | à Rome, | en Italie.

Postmarks: CHAMBERY, ANGLETERRE, and an illegible dated one.

Hampstead. 21<sup>st</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> 1820.

My dear Keats,

Not two hours since your letter from Rome 30<sup>th</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> came to me,—and as to-morrow is post night, you shall have the answer in due course. And so you still wish me to follow you to Rome? and truly I wish to go,—nothing detains me but prudence. Little could be gained, if any thing, by letting my house at this time of the year, and the consequence would be a heavy additional expence which I cannot possibly afford,—unless it were a matter of necessity, and I see none while you are in such good hands as Severn's. As for my appropriating any part of remittances from George, that is out of the question, while you continue disabled from writing. Thank God, you are getting better! Your last letter, which I so gravely answered about 4<sup>th</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup>, showed how much you had suffered by the voyage & the cursed quarantine. Keep your mind easy, my dear fellow, & no fear of your body. Your sister I hear is in remarkably good health,—the last news from George (already given to you) was so far favorable that there were no complaints. Every body next door is quite well. Taylor has just returned to Town,—I saw him for a few minutes the other day, & had not time to put some questions which I wished,—but I understand your poems<sup>1</sup> increase in sale. Hunt has been very ill, but is now recovered. All other friends are well. I know you don't like John Scott, but he is doing a thing that tickles me to the heart's core, and you will like to hear of it, if you have any revenge in your composition. By some means (crooked enough I dare say) he has got possession of one of Blackwood's gang, who has turned King's evidence, and month after month he belabours them with the most damning facts that can be conceived;—if they are indeed facts, I know not how the rogues can stand up against them. This virulent attack has made me like the London Magazine, & I sent the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of my Tour for Scott to publish, if he would pay me 10 Gn<sup>s</sup> per sheet, & print the whole chapters monthly, without my forfeiting the copyright in the end. This would have answered my purpose famously,—but he won't agree to my stipulations. He praises my writing wondrously,—will pay the 10 Gn<sup>s</sup> & so on,—but the fellow forsooth must have the chapters somewhat converted into the usual style of magazine articles, & so the treaty is at an end. O,—I must tell you Abby<sup>2</sup> is living with me again, but not in the same capacity,—she keeps to her own bed, & I keep myself continent. Any more nonsense of the former kind would put me in an awkward predicament with her. One child is very well. She behaves extremely well, and, by what I hear from Sam, my arrangements prevent the affair from giving pain next door. The fact is I could not afford to allow her a separate establishment. M<sup>rs</sup> Brown at first (I thought) behaved tolerably well,—I can't say so much for

<sup>1</sup> 'Lamia, Isabella, &c.'

<sup>2</sup> His wife, née Abigail Donaghue. The child was Charles Brown (Carlo, or Carlino), born July 16, 1820, while Brown was in Scotland. See 'A Life of John Keats', by Dorothy Hewlett, 1949, p. 276.



*Frances Brawne to Joseph Severn]*

*February*

her now;—her husband knows nothing of the matter yet, as she says. In the mean time the child thrives gloriously,—but I'm not going to be fondly parental, for, between you & me, I think an infant is disagreeable,—it is all gut and squall. I dined with Richards on his wedding day,—he had just recovered from breaking his leg,—how could he be so brittle?—and it was done in a game at romps with his children!—Now I've something to make you 'spit fire, spout flame', the batch of Brag players asked me to town, hoping to fleece me,—it was at Reynolds' lodging,—& I carried off £2. 10/-,—when will they be sick of these vain attempts? Mrs Dilke was next door yesterday,—she had a sad tumble in the mud,—(you must not laugh,)—her news was that Martin is to be married this year,—that Reynolds & Mrs Montague correspond sentimentally,—& that Barry Cornwall is to have Miss Montague,—there's some interesting small talk for you. Oh! Barry C: has a tragedy coming forth at the Theatre,—christened *Mirandola*,—*Mire* and *O la*!—What an odd being you are,—because you & I were so near meeting twice, yet missed each other both times, you cry out "there was *my* star predominant!"—why not *mine* (CB's) as well? But this is the way you argue yourself into fits of the spleen. If I were in Severn's place, & you insisted on ever gnawing a bone, I'd lead you the life of a dog. What the devil should you grumble for? Do you recollect my anagram on your name?—how pat it comes now to Severn!—my love to him & the said anagram.—"*Thanks Joe!*" If I have a right guess, a certain person next door is a little disappointed at not receiving a letter from you, but not a word has dropped. She wrote to you lately, & so did your sister.

Your's most faithfully,  
Cha<sup>s</sup>. Brown.

*From MRS. BRAWNE to SEVERN. February 6, 1821.*

*Address: Joseph Severn Esq<sup>r</sup> | Poste Restante | à Rome | En Italie*

*Postmarks: Hampstead NO | 2 py P. Paid | Paid 2/11 | Angleterre | 26  
Feb<sup>y</sup> and two others illegible.*

Hampstead Feb<sup>y</sup> 6 1821

My Dr Mr Severn

Your Letter afforded me great consolation if it were only hearing Mr Keats was in a tranquil state of mind how much I feel for you how unfortunate his being out of England or happy shou'd I have been to have assisted you in nursing him after the distressing accounts we have heard I scarcely dare have a hope of his recovery but I will trust to what you say When you talk of bringing him to England it cheers us for believe me I shou'd consider it among the happiest moments of my life to see him here in better health You do not say whether he has a cough which I fear he has Your Voyage every thing has been unfortunate the only comfort you have had has been in meeting with kind Friends in Dr and Mrs Clark but we must hope for better prospects Mr Keats has sincere Friends in England who are most anxious about him shou'd he be recovering in the slightest degree entreat him for their sake to look forward and not dwell upon

the past as I feel assured it would add greatly towards it—. I saw Mr Haslam last Week he appears much distressed for Mr Keats and your self I must beg you to take care of your own Health do not omit taking nourishment as it is absolutely necessary to support you during the fatigue of Body and mind under which you must be labouring Mr Taylor sent me the Miniature beautifully set (*sic*) for which I return you many thanks I receiv'd your Letter on Feby 1 and the next Morn<sup>g</sup> sent your Message to Mr Taylor

Whenever you are allow'd to mention Hampstead tell him we all desire to be kindly remembered to him and shall feel happy to pay his Sister every attention Fanny and she have constantly corresponded since he left Engla<sup>nd</sup> Should there be any thing I cou'd do or send for you pray write as I shall take a pleasure in it Mr Brown desires to be remembered to Mr Keats and your self he wrote to you the 30 of last Month For the future any letter with the Initials F B at the corner we will leave to your discretion to give to Mr Keats but we intrust them to your care Your account of Italy wou'd not induce me to visit it if I may judge by the feeling of those you have had to deal with their want of it annoys me beyond description—. Fanny desires to be particularly remember'd to you With hopes I may have shortly another favourable account and with love to Mr Keats I remain My Dr Mr Severn

Your sincere and Oblig'd Friend  
Frances Brawne

## APPENDIX

### I

#### CHARLES JEREMIAH WELLS'S HOAX ON THOMAS KEATS

See pages 318 and 324

Keats wrote and underlined at the head of this effusion 'Read this one first', which indicates that the hoax consisted of two letters at least. The manuscript fills three pages and the doublings of a quarto sheet measuring  $9 \times 7\frac{1}{4}$  in. The first page contains 52 lines in very small handwriting not easy to read; the rest is in a normal hand. The address is 'Mr. Thomas Keats, Post Office, Margate', and in the left-hand bottom corner is written 'Tuesday C.W.' The postmark is not clear but the year, 1816, is quite legible. The postage cost Thomas Keats eightpence.

The Square 6 o'clock PM—

My Dear Tom:

Before you read this Letter consider the situation in which I am placed not as tho I but Amena was writing to you and as tho' I was not even privy to it consider that I have no will of my own but act according to Amena's direction if she obliges me to speak my own praise as I have no doubt she will you must not think me vain but I forget you wish me at the Devil all this time for taking up so much room while there is a chance of the dear Girls filling it how shall I edit it Amena

My Dear Friend Tom: I do not as is usual set me down to write this to you you will not have to complain of my Drowsey Pen but I am begining without making an excuse no matter Cha<sup>s</sup> has done that more ably you may be obliged to his kindness for this I could not have penn'd it myself without great pain and difficulty but let this compensate you I see Cha<sup>s</sup> is writing verry close so you will have as much again he knows how to please you I perceive I have as yet that pleasant task to learn tho I flatter myself I shall become an apt scholar but without further delay to answer your Letter Is it possible my Dear Friend that the few lines I last wrote to you can have given you so great pleasure did you not perceive innumerable Faults many of which I myself saw or where you blind to them you are too kind & too huml (for humble) & indeed why not find fault why not say Cha<sup>s</sup> has described you as verry beautiful but I think he erres Tell me Tom do you really think he Flatters me or what is the meaning of this doubt but you will not like me less for being less Beautiful We are both indebted to you for the time you spend on our account I sincerely feel your kindness to me tis unmerited tho by no means unwelcome how kind to humour me to call me English Girl would to god the Blood

## Appendix

in my vains were English but how can I have hon(o)red you I do no(t) see it, you tell me you are happy to find that I can boast a romantic Imagination how so who told you I was romantic r[e]ally if I could think so I should be verry proud of myself I never told you so I said I admired but not that I possessed so much you must have mad[e] a mistake and yet even at this Minuit Cha<sup>s</sup> Tells me my Ideas are often finely romantic & he is able to Judge he has often told me so but I never said so much of myself you will make me Vain between you and that would be a pittty for I can assure you my heart has hitherto been an utter stranger to Pride I hate I abhor it as a bar betwixt the happiness of Man & Man feelings noble & Patriotic I own I have they ~~are~~ my greatest comforts in this *unhappy World* I would if I must loose one rather part with my Fortune than Noble Feeling an hundred times they are my admiration nay a part of my religion "Oh you modest youth I think I must name you bashful Tom Steel Keep your Temper thats all dont let me compliment before I know whether you deserve as for hurting my Modesty tis nonsense you know what a Jade I am I am the Amazon who is to meet you with open Arms & give you an hundred Kisses remember that & think if I can blush you think me more modest than I really am & yet you shall find me innocent spotless as your own or Chas<sup>s</sup> heart & you shall find me capable of being grateful for your past Kindness believe me I shall not easily forget it & for your Love to Cha<sup>s</sup> I shall Love & respect you for ever for it & let me assure you he is really deserving of it You may deservedly scold Cha<sup>s</sup> for prophaning the name of Immortal Shakespear but you may at the same time take my word for I assure you he did not mean it it has afforded us amusement for many happy hours do hear Cha<sup>s</sup>—do you refute Toms in a hurry to Triumph (yes you little Vixen I do you beat me every way) Tom excuse me if I request an explanation to this in you[r] next I have relieved you verry much I do not admire a person for their Face how have I relieved you (thats just the thing Tom) Charles here says my distinction of Character does not do me credit or I should never have chosen for a companion such a little vagabond as himself did you ever hear it seems impossible to break him of it I am tired to hear it he is a good and a noble fellow & in my opinion is all the better for being little I am but little myself & I am determined to have a little Husband if I ever have any but the Men now a days are such queer creatures I dont know what to think of them & then again the Women can only small talk & giggling oh I have not patience to think how degenerate they are What my Dr Tom is more like an Angel than a Beautiful unaffected Woman a compound of all the Delacacies of nature what can touch your heart more than the modest eye of a beautiful Girl but how is your soul entranced to find her sensible as beautiful a Woman of this Discription and an Independancy would be the greatest blessing you could enjoy each day after marriage insted of declining in Love would increase happiness would increase you with all thy pride of soul would live but in her smiles

Now would dame Fortune Fickle Jade grant me but my request Id prove to the[e] whether I could be ungrateful this Instant would I bind about thy Loins a Cuirass a Shield & Sword Id give to the[e] Tempered with my Virgin Blessing upon thy head so honorable would

## Appendix

I place a shining Brazen Helmet and on the top shou'd be in form of an Innocent Dove mine own high Honour as sign that I can trust it to the Keeping the Shield shou'd be a Mass of Shining Adamant where on engraven is the name of thy Fair Love and on thy many couloured breast Plait should be stamp a holy cross in sign that thy mind as tis was Purity and in thy right hand thou shouldst wield a spear like the one that thundering Ajax thro his superior in Spirit Noble Hector pierced & thou shouldst wear the Sword that the high Britomartis wielded & with the Vow of holy Maid shouds't thou be shielded and I my self (pardon my presumption) would like to <be> thy Squire thy Page for I can ride & scour a Field as swift as did the brave Camilla spoke of by *famous Homer* and I would fearless hunt the Tushed Boar of Inde or oer the Moss of Lapland would pursue the Bounding reindeer for a pure heart doth make me fearless fit Squire to so Noble Virtuous Knight onward with thee I'd travel cheering thy heart with Melody of Voice and with Guitarr well strung by Cupid God of Love would lull thy restless heart into a melodious slumber and when that Cloyd I from my breast would take a reeden Pipe & whistle the sweet tunes and lulabies to thy sore Love oppressed heart but when the Castle near we came where that thy Love sweet Maid confined was by Faries and guarded too by monsters like to Men but many times the size I from my Horse woud light & from a rock would stooping touch a Harp there placed by an old old Man a Poor Venerable Bard who to his latter days tho blind had found his greatest comfort in till by these Wretches horrible he Slaughtered was because that his Holy strain did comfort give to thy imprisoned Love then with Hand as bold as Noble Wallace Scotland's Patriot would I strike the Lyre so with the sound of War and song of fighting Knights revenge for thy fair Love & the poor poor Old Man her comforter thy noble heart inflamed is and to the Portaal large thou rushest filled with a Christian God like ardor and when thou thrice hath sounded the rough bugle to the Blast which thro' the Cavarn blared so horrible that Gulls & Rock birds frightened were quite from their nests & when the surly warder turns the rusty lock and when the Brazen Portaal wide opened is Two Giants large do strike the astonished sight armed with Bludgeons by Devils Spiked sore scourge to noble Knights & bold Intruders still thy brave heart appalled not at all doth prompt thy Voice to bid them bold Defiance forward they rush with Deavlish fury fraught and on thy lusty Shield doth shed such direful blows of discord that the Dell far off dothe echo back the ringing sound when with a Mickle blow fraught to[o] with dedly might they smite thy Plait of Steel weeling the[e] round till on thy Knee thou dropst with large unequal fight forspent and almost overcome when from the Portal flying thou perceived thy Love white as the Snow on Pyrenian Mountain Top spotless as the ray of Glorious Sun pursued by the Warder rough who great advantage hath when from my Vest I draw a Silver Bow the Gift of Juno: & arrow swift as Feathered Mercury & as unerring a[s] the Thracian youth dire enemy to the Trojan band striking the guilty wretch full in his verry heart the Maiden sweet knowing thy Figure portly tall & all thy stout becoming to thee her Lover for protection fleeth which with new life & vigour fireth thy noble soul thy Spear thou seisest in thy hottest

## Appendix

rage & with a force full hard as Godly Spencers Knight sir Calidor did wing his Wizzing Lance so didst thou thine true Aim full in his brawney breast its entrance finds & adds another Pheand to the train of Black Diabolus the other still trusting in his mighty bulk doth tempt the rage again till on his sinewy Bull like neck the sword so worthy of its great master falls & cuts the Fairy link as of Life & shall I tell the[e] Tom the Faries rage up[on] returning I could tell the[e] how with thy loved ones thou dost pass thy happy hours lolling on violet bedds & telling tales of Love Shall I tell the[e] No I think I have told the[e] enough to prove me a Sympleton I shall judge whether you approve of this way of Divirting your mind by your writing me something romantic in your Letter to me I beg I request it I have exposed my own folly in hoping you will make me a return of your own sensibility Cha<sup>s</sup> amuses me in this way for hours you are always a party in our happy flights but let me proceed to answer your Letter Cha<sup>s</sup> is writing so badly that I really cant read it so you must excuse all bungles

How highly honored do I feel that Amena is to be the word of reconciliation tis really great happiness to me & I thank you heartily I still say do not neglect Cha<sup>s</sup> his conduct deserves attention if you would avoid Jealousy see Amenas Pretty Face but remember Cha<sup>s</sup> was before hand with you had it not been for him you would not have received this nay even known that there was an Amena believe me we are both much Indebted to him You know my determination as to Milton & Spenser that part of your Letter was useless I shall not express myself as to the Poetry till you have finished it—Cha<sup>s</sup> is quite Melancholy because I cant play to him in consequence of my hurt he has been tikling & Kissing me all the Evening I shall be glad when you come to take my part he's a terrible fellow & too much for me he sat for 10 Minuits just now admiring my Face I never saw anyone so affected you would have thought he had been in love but he is verry indifferent as to what comes of me You and I must put our heads together to make him Jealous I send you this & a Kis expecting you will return it by a Long Letter to me I feel great pleasure in your correspondence only I am so stupid a little thing at Letter writing do not forget to thank Cha<sup>s</sup> fo(r) his Kindness and b[e]lieve me

Your willing little Debtor

Amena Bellefila

PS. Take care how you ride again this may be taken in Two senses oh you compound of Impudence says you Adieu

## II

### A SONNET OF RONSARD

See page 217

Nature ornant Cassandre, qui devoit  
De sa douceur forcer les plus rebelles,  
Luy fist present des beautez les plus belles  
Que dès mille ans en espargne elle avoit.

### Appendix

De tous les biens qu'Amour-oiseau couvoit  
Au plus beau Ciel cherement sous ses ailes,  
Il enrichit les graces immortelles  
De l'œil son Nye, qui les Dieux esmouvoit.  
Du Ciel à peine elle estoit descendue  
Quand je la vy, quand mon ame esperdue  
Perdit raison, et d'un si poignant trait  
Le fier destin la poussa dans mes veines,  
Qu'autres plaisirs je ne sens que mes peines,  
Ny autre bien qu'adorer son pourtrait.

### III

#### JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART TO JOHN AITKEN

see Aitken's letter to Keats, p. 514

Abbotsford

Sept. 15, 1820

Sir

I feel extremely obliged by the kind terms of yr. two letters & have many apologies to offer for my neglect in not long ere now answering the first of them. You must excuse me however for I have been a mere wanderer all this summer & altho' your packet reached me several weeks ago when I was at Edir *en passant* I have really never had a moment's leisure to think of what you said.

If I saw you in proper person I am sure I cd satisfactorily explain myself—but in the meantime you must be content w<sup>th</sup> this *quod nihili est* that I have already attempted to say something kind of Mr. Keats in Blackwoods Magazine but been thwarted I know not well how. In truth I do utterly despise the Cockney School—& almost hate it seeing (as I do see) that whoever joins it—be he possessed of what genius he will—must by the connection simply be damned. Ecce Keats—a fine lad full of feeling but Cockneyfied with (half) a mere laughing-stock writing *Modern Greek* & guilty of all other abominations.

I trust his health will mend—& that he will live to be a merry fellow—eat red herrings—and quizz the Cockney King &c. &c. &c. I am with much regard, dear Sir,

Yr. obligd Sert.

J G Lockhart

I enclose Mr Reynolds' excellent letter. Yr Indicators are in Edir but shall be sent as soon as I am there—which however, I fear may not be for many weeks.

JGL

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